

WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN:

A

TRAGEDY.



BY

THOMAS MIDDLETON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Duke of Florence.

Lord Cardinal, brother to the Duke.

Two Cardinals more.

A Lord.

Fabritio, father to Isabella.

Hippolito, brother to Fabritio.

Guardiano, uncle to the Foolish Ward.

The Ward, a rich young heir.

Leantio, a factor, husband to Brancha.

Sordido, the Ward's man.

Livia, sister to Fabritio and Hippolito.

Isabella, daughter to Fabritio.

Brancha, Leantio's wife.

Mother to Leantio, a widow.

*States of Florence, Citizens, an Apprentice, Boys, Messenger,
and Servants.*

WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN *.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter LEANTIO with BRANCHA, and his Mother.

Moth. THY sight was never yet more precious
to me :

Welcome ! with all the affection of a mother,
That comfort can express from natural love :
Since thy birth-joy (a mother's chiefest gladness,
After she's undergone her curse of sorrows)
Thou was't not more dear to me, than this hour
Presents thee to my heart. Welcome, again !

Leant. (*Aside.*) Alas, poor affectionate soul,
how her joys speak to me !

I have observ'd it often, and I know it is
The fortune commonly of knavish children
To have the loving'st mothers.

Moth. What's this gentlewoman ?

Leant. Oh, you have nam'd the most unvalued
purchase,

* The address by N. Richards to our author, should properly have been prefixed to this play ; but as this and the preceding were published in one volume, in 1657, and it is there of course found in its present situation, I thought it unnecessary to remove it, particularly as it is now in a degree connected with his life.

That youth of man had ever knowledge of.
 As often as I look upon that treasure,
 And know it to be mine, (there lies the blessing!)
 It joys me that I ever was ordain'd
 To have a being, and to live 'mongst men ;
 Which is a fearful living, and a poor one,
 Let a man truly think on't.

To have the toil and griefs of fourscore years
 Put up in a white sheet, ty'd with two knots :
 Methinks it should strike earthquakes in adul-
 terers,
 When e'en the very sheets they commit sin in,
 May prove, for ought they know, all their last
 garments.

Oh, what a mark were there for women then !
 But beauty, able to content a conqueror,
 (Whom earth could scarce content) keeps me in
 compass :

I find no wish in me bent sinfully
 To this man's sister, or to that man's wife :
 In love's name let 'em keep their honesties,
 And cleave to their own husbands, 'tis their duties.
 Now when I go to church, I can pray handsomely ;
 Nor come like gallants only to see faces,
 As if lust went to market still on Sundays.
 I must confess I am guilty of one sin, mother,
 More than I brought into the world with me ;
 But that I glory in ; 'tis theft ; but noble
 As ever greatness yet shot up withal.

Moth. How's that ?

Leant. Never to be repented, mother,
 Though sin be death ; I had died, if I had not sin'd,
 And here's my master-piece : Do you now behold
 her ?

Look on her well, she's mine; look on her better;
 Now say if 't be not the best piece of theft
 That ever was committed? and I have my pardon
 for't;

'Tis seal'd from heaven by marriage.

Moth. Married to her!

Leant. You must keep counsel, mother, I am
 undone else;

If it be known, I have lost her; do but think now
 What that loss is; life's but a trifle to't!

From Venice, her consent and I have brought her
 From parents great in wealth, more now in rage;
 But let storms spend their furies; now we have got
 A shelter o'er our quiet innocent loves,

We are contented: little money she's brought me;
 View but her face, you may see all her dowry,
 Save that which lies lock'd up in hidden virtues,
 Like jewels kept in cabinets.

Moth. You're to blame,

(If your obedience will give way to a check)
 To wrong such a perfection.

Leant. How!

Moth. Such a creature,

To draw her from her fortune, which, no doubt,
 At the full time, might have prov'd rich and noble;
 You know not what you have done: my life can
 give you

But little helps, and my death lesser hopes;
 And hitherto your own means has but made shift
 To keep you single, and that hardly too:

What ableness have you to do her right then
 In maintenance fitting her birth and virtues?

Which ev'ry woman of necessity looks for,

And most to go above it; not confin'd
 By their conditions, virtues, bloods, or births,
 But flowing to affections, wills, and humours.

Leant. (Aside to his Moth.) Speak low, sweet
 mother; you are able to spoil as many
 As come within the hearing: if it be not
 Your fortune to mar all, I have much marvel.
 I pray do not you teach her to rebel,
 When she's in a good way to obedience;
 To rise with other women in commotion
 Against their husbands, for six gowns a year,
 And so maintain their cause (when they're once up)
 In all things else that require cost enough.
 They are all of 'em a kind of spirits soon rais'd,
 But not so soon laid, in other: As, for example,
 A woman's belly is got up in a trice,
 A simple charge ere it be laid down again:
 So ever in all their quarrels, and their courses.
 And I'm a proud man, I hear nothing of 'em;
 They're very still, I thank my happiness,
 And sound asleep; pray let not your tongue wake
 'em.

If you can but rest quiet, she's contented
 With all conditions that my fortunes bring her to;
 To keep close as a wife that loves her husband;
 To go after the rate of my ability,
 Not the licentious swinge of her own will,
 Like some of her old school-fellows; she intends
 To take out other works in a new sampler,
 And frame the fashion of an honest love,
 Which knows no wants: but mocking poverty
 Brings forth more children, to make rich men
 wonder

At divine providence, that feeds mouths of infants,
And sends them none to feed; but stuffs their
rooms

With fruitful bags, their beds with barren wombs.
Good mother, make not you things worse than
they are,

Out of your too much openness; pray take heed
on't;

Nor imitate the envy of old people,
That strive to mar good sport, because they are
perfect.

I would have you more pitiful to youth,
Especially to your own flesh and blood.

I'll prove an excellent husband, (here's my hand),
Lay in provision, follow my business roundly,
And make you a grandmother in forty weeks.
Go, pray salute her, bid her welcome cheerfully.

Moth. Gentlewoman, (*salutes her*) thus much
is a debt of courtesy,

Which fashionable strangers pay each other
At a kind meeting; then there's more than one
Due to the knowledge I have of your nearness.
I am bold to come again, and now salute you
By th' name of daughter, which may challenge
more

Than ordinary respect. [*Salutes her again.*]

Leant. (*Aside.*) Why, this is well now;
And I think few mothers of threescore will mend it.

Moth. What I can bid you welcome to, is mean;
But make it all your own: we are full of wants,
And cannot welcome worth.

Leant. (*Aside.*) Now this is scurvy;
And spoke as if a woman lack'd her teeth.

These old folks talk of nothing but defects,
Because they grow so full of 'em themselves.

Bran. Kind mother, there is nothing can be
wanting

To her that does enjoy all her desires.

Heaven send a quiet peace with this man's love,
And I am as rich as virtue can be poor;

Which were enough after the rate of mind,
To erect temples for content plac'd here.

I have forsook friends, fortunes, and my country,
And hourly I rejoice in't. Here's my friends,
And few is the good number : (*To Leant.* Thy
successes.

(Howe'er they look), I will still name my fortunes,
Hopeful or spiteful, they shall all be welcome :

Who invites many guests, has of all sorts,
As he that traffics much, drinks of all fortunes,
Yet they must all be welcome, and us'd well.

I'll call this place the place of my birth now,
And rightly too; for here my love was born,
And that's the birth-day of a woman's joys.

You have not bid me welcome since I came.

Leant. That I did questionless.

Bran. No sure? how was't?

I have quite forgot it.

Leant. Thus,

[*Kisses her.*

Bran. Oh, sir, 'tis true;

Now I remember well: I have done thee wrong,
Pray take 't again, sir.

[*Kisses him.*

Leant. How many of these wrongs
Could I put up in an hour? and turn up the glass*
For twice as many more.

* In allusion to the hour-glass.

Moth. Will't please you to walk in, daughter?

Bran. Thanks, sweet mother!

The voice of her that bare me, is not more pleasing.
[*Exeunt.*

Leant. Though my own care, and my rich master's trust,

Lay their commands both on my factorship,
This day and night, I'll know no other business
But her and her dear welcome. 'Tis a bitterness
To think upon to-morrow! that I must leave
Her still to the sweet hopes of the week's end;
That pleasure should be so restrain'd and curb'd
After the course of a rich work-master,
That never pays till Saturday night!

Marry, it comes together in a round sum then,
And does more good, you'll say: Oh, fair-ey'd
Florence!

Didst thou but know what a most matchless jewel
Thou now art mistress of, a pride would take thee,
Able to shoot destruction through the bloods
Of all thy youthful sons: but 'tis great policy
To keep choice treasures in obscurest places:
Should we show thieves our wealth, 'twould make
'em bolder:

Temptation is a devil will not stick
To fasten upon a saint; take heed of that;
The jewel is cas'd up from all mens' eyes.
Who could imagine now a gem were kept,
Of that great value under this plain roof?
But how in times of absence? what assurance
Of this restraint then? Yes, yes! there's one with
her.

Old mothers know the world; and such as these,
When sons lock chests, are good to look to keys.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter GUARDIANO, FABRITIO, *and* LIVIA.

Guard. What, has your daughter seen him yet?
know you that?

Fab. No matter, she shall love him.

Guard. Nay, let's have fair play:

He has been now my ward some fifteen year,
And 'tis my purpose (as time calls upon me,
By custom seconded, and such moral virtues)
To tender him a wife: now, sir, this wife
I'd fain elect out of a daughter of yours;
You see my meaning's fair: if now this daughter
So tendered (let me come to your own phrase, sir,)
Should offer to refuse him, I were hansell'd.

(*Aside.*) Thus am I fain to calculate all my words,
For the meridian of a foolish old man;
To take his understanding. What do you an-
swer, sir?

Fab. I say still, she shall love him.

Guard. Yet again?

And shall she have no reason for this love?

Fab. Why, do you think that women love with
reason?

Guard. (*Aside.*) I perceive fools are not at all
hours foolish,

No more than wise men wise.

Fab. I had a wife,

She ran mad for me; she had no reason for't,
For ought I could perceive. What think you,
lady sister?

Guard. (Aside.) 'Twas a fit match that,
Being both out of their wits: a loving wife, it
seem'd

She strove to come as near you as she could.

Fab. And if her daughter prove not mad for
love too,

She takes not after her; nor after me,
If she prefer reason before my pleasure:
You're an experienc'd widow, lady sister,
I pray let your opinion come amongst us.

Liv. I must offend you then, if truth will do't,
And take my niece's part, and call't injustice
To force her love to one she never saw.
Maids should both see, and like; all little enough;
If they love truly after that, 'tis well.

Counting the time, she takes one man till death,
That's a hard task, I tell you; but one may
Enquire at three years end amongst young wives,
And mark how the game goes.

Fab. Why, is not man
Tied to the same observance, lady sister,
And in one woman?

Liv. 'Tis enough for him:
Besides, he tastes of many sundry dishes
That we poor wretches never lay our lips to;
As obedience forsooth, subjection, duty, and such
kickshaws,

All of our making, but serv'd in to them;
And if we lick a finger, then sometimes,
We are not to blame; your best cooks use it.

Fab. Thou'rt a sweet lady, sister, and a witty.

Liv. A witty! Oh, the bud of commendation
Fit for a girl of sixteen! I am blown, man!
I should be wise by this time; and for instance,

I have buried my two husbands in good fashion,
And never mean more to marry.

Guard. No! why so, lady?

Liv. Because the third shall never bury me :
I think I am more than witty : how think you, sir?

Fab. I have paid often fees to a counsellor
Has had a weaker brain.

Liv. Then I must tell you,
Your money was soon parted.

Guard. Light her now, brother.

Liv. Where is my niece? let her be sent for
straight,

If you have any hope 'twill prove a wedding :
'Tis fit i'faith she should have one sight of him,
And stop upon't, and not be join'd in haste,
As if they went to stock a new found land.

Fab. Look out her uncle, and you're sure of her:
Those two are ne'er asunder ; they've been heard
In argument at midnight ; moonshine nights
Are noon days with them ; they walk out their
sleeps ;

Or rather at those hours, appear like those
That walk in 'em, for so they did to me.
Look you, I told you truth ; they're like a chain,
Draw but one link, all follows.

Enter HIPPOLITO and ISABELLA.

Guard. Oh affinity!

What piece of excellent workmanship art thou !
'Tis work clean wrought, for there's no lust, but
love in't,
And that abundantly ; when in stranger things,
There is no love at all, but what lust brings.

Fab. On with your mask! for 'tis your part to see now,

And not be seen: Go to, make use of your time; See what you mean to like; nay, and I charge you, Like what you see: do you hear me? there's no dallying;

The gentleman's almost twenty, and 'tis time He were getting lawful heirs, and you a breeding on 'em.

Isab. Good father!

Fab. Tell not me of tongues and rumours. You'll say the gentleman is somewhat simple; The better for a husband, were you wise; For those that marry fools, live ladies' lives. On with the mask! I'll hear no more! he's rich; The fool's hid under bushels.

Liv. Not so hid neither, But here's a foul great piece of him methinks; What will he be, when he comes altogether?

Enter the WARD with a Trap-stick, and SORDIDO his Man.

Ward. Beat him?

I beat him out o' th' field with his own cat-stick, Yet gave him the first hand.

Sord. Oh, strange!

Ward. I did it;

Then he set Jacks on me.

Sord. What, my lady's tailor?

Ward. Ay, and I beat him too.

Sord. Nay, that's no wonder, He's us'd to beating.

Ward. Nay, I tickl'd him When I came once to my tippings.

Sord. Now you talk on 'em; there was a poulterer's wife made a great complaint of you last night to your gardener, that you struck a bump in her child's head as big as an egg.

Ward. An egg may prove a chicken, then in time the poulterer's wife will get by't. When I am in game, I am furious; came my mother's eyes in my way, I would not lose a fair end: no, were she alive, but with one tooth in her head, I should venture the striking out of that. I think of nobody when I am in play, I am so earnest. Coads me, my gardianer! Prithee, lay up my cat and cat-stick safe*.

Sord. Where, sir; i' th' chimney corner?

Ward. Chimney corner!

Sord. Yes, sir; your cats are always safe i' th' chimney corner,

Unless they burn their coats.

Ward. Marry, that I am afraid on!

Sord. Why, then, I will bestow your cat i' th' gutter,

And there she's safe, I am sure.

Ward. If I but live

To keep a house, I'll make thee a great man,
If meat and drink can do't. I can stoop gallantly,
And pitch out when I list: I'm dog at a hole:
I marv'l my guardianer does not seek a wife
for me;

* *Cat-stick* and *trap-stick* are the same, I conceive, as is now, in our northern counties, called *cat-stick*; with which a wooden ball, or oblong piece of wood, about three inches in length, there called a trippet, is struck by the players. The game seems formerly, from a passage in Act III., to have been called *cat and trap*.

I protest I'll have a bout with the maids else,
Or contract myself at midnight to the larder-
woman,

In presence of a fool, and a sack-posset.

Guard. Ward!

Ward. I feel myself after any exercise
Horribly prone: let me but ride, I'm lusty,
A cock-horse, straight i'faith!

Guard. Why, Ward, I say!

Ward. I'll forswear eating eggs on moonshine
nights;

There's ne'er a one I eat, but turns into a cock
In four-and-twenty hours; if my hot blood
Be not took down in time, sure 'twill crow shortly.

Guard. Do you hear, sir? follow me, I must
new school you.

Ward. School me? I scorn that now; I am
past schooling.

I am not so base to learn to write and read;
I was born to better fortunes in my cradle.

[*Exit.*

Fab. How do you like him, girl? This is your
husband.

Like him, or like him not, wench, you shall have
him,

And you shall love him.

Liv. Oh, soft there, brother! though you be a
justice,

Your warrant cannot be serv'd out of your liberty;
You may compel, out of the power of father,
Things merely harsh to a maid's flesh and blood;
But when you come to love, there the soil alters;
You're in another country, where your laws
Are no more set by, than the cacklings
Of geese in Rome's great capitol.

Fab. Marry him she shall then ;
Let her agree upon love afterwards. [Exit.]

Liv. You speak now, brother, like an honest mortal
That walks upon the earth with a staff ;
You were up i' th' clouds before ; you'd command
love,

And so do most old folks that go without it.
(*To Hip.*) My best and dearest brother ! I could
dwell here ;

There is not such another seat on earth,
Where all good parts better express themselves.

Hip. You'll make me blush anon.

Liv. 'Tis but like saying grace before a feast
then,
And that most comely ; thou art all a feast,
And she that has thee, a most happy guest.
Prithee cheer up thy niece with special counsel*.

[Exit.]

Hip. (*Aside.*) I would 'twere fit to speak to
her what I would ! but
'Twas not a thing ordain'd ; heaven has forbid it ;
And 'tis most meet that I should rather perish
Than the decree divine receive least blemish :
Feed inward you my sorrows, make no noise,
Consume me silent, let me be stark dead
Ere the world know I'm sick. You see my ho-
nesty,
If you befriend me, so.

Isab. (*Aside.*) Marry a fool !
Can there be greater misery to a woman
That means to keep her days true to her husband,

* Livia's quitting the stage is not marked in the original, and yet it seems certain that she is not present during the ensuing dialogue between Hippolito and Isabella.

And know no other man? so virtue wills it.
 Why; how can I obey and honour him,
 But I must needs commit idolatry?
 A fool is but the image of a man,
 And that but ill made neither. Oh the heart-
 breakings

Of miserable maids, where love's enforc'd!
 The best condition is but bad enough:
 When women have their choices, commonly
 They do but buy their thraldoms, and bring great
 portions
 To men to keep 'em in subjection;
 As if a fearful prisoner should bribe
 The keeper to be good to him, yet lies in still,
 And glad of a good usage, a good look
 Sometimes; by'r lady, no misery surmounts a wo-
 man's!

Men buy their slaves, but women buy their masters:
 Yet honesty and love makes all this happy,
 And next to angels, the most bless'd estate.
 That providence, that has made ev'ry poison
 Good for some use, and sets four warring elements
 At peace in man, can make a harmony
 In things that are most strange to human reason.
 Oh, but this marriage!—What, are you sad too,
 uncle?

Faith then there's a whole household down to-
 gether:

Where shall I go to seek my comfort now
 When my best friend's distressed? What is't af-
 flicts you, sir?

Hip. Faith, nothing but one grief that will not
 leave me,

And now 'tis welcome; ev'ry man has something

To bring him to his end, and this will serve,
Join'd with your father's cruelty to you,
That helps it forward.

Isab. Oh, be cheer'd, sweet uncle!

How long has 't been upon you? I ne'er spy'd it:
What a dull sight have I! how long I pray, sir?

Hip. Since I first saw you, niece, and left
Bologna.

Isab. And could you deal so unkindly with my
heart,

To keep it up so long hid from my pity?

Alas! how shall I trust your love hereafter?

Have we pass'd through so many arguments,
And miss'd of that still, the most needful one?

Wak'd out whole nights together in discourses,

And the main point forgot? we are to blame both;

This is an obstinate, wilful, forgetfulness,

And faulty on both parts: let's lose no time now;

Begin, good uncle, you that feel 't; what is it?

Hip. You of all creatures, niece, must never
hear on't;

'Tis not a thing ordain'd for you to know.

Isab. Not I, sir? all my joys that word cuts off;

You made profession once you lov'd me best;

'Twas but profession!

Hip. Yes, I do't too truly,

And fear I shall be chid for't. Know the worst
then:

I love thee dearlier than an uncle can.

Isab. Why so you ever said, and I believ'd it.

Hip. (*Aside.*) So simple is the goodness of
her thoughts,

They understand not yet th' unhallowed language
Of a near sinner: I must yet be forced

(Though blushes be my venture) to come nearer.
As a man loves his wife, so love I thee.

Isab. What's that?

Methought I heard ill news come toward me,
Which commonly we understand too soon;
Then over quick at hearing; I'll prevent it,
Though my joys fare the harder; welcome it:
It shall ne'er come so near mine ear again.
Farewell all friendly solaces and discourses,
I'll learn to live without ye, for your dangers
Are greater than your comforts: what's become
Of truth in love, if such we cannot trust,
When blood, that should be love, is mix'd with lust!
[*Exit.*

Hip. The worst can be but death, and let it
come;
He that lives joyless, ev'ry day's his doom.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Enter LEANTIO alone.

Lean. Methinks I'm e'en as dull now at departure,

As men observe great gallants the next day
After a revel: you shall see 'em look
Much of my fashion, if you mark 'em well.
'Tis e'en a second hell to part from pleasure,
When man has got a smack on't: as many holidays
Coming together make your poor heads idle.
A great while after, and are said to stick
Fast in their fingers' ends, e'en so does game
In a new married couple; for the time

It spoils all thrift, and indeed lies a-bed
To invent all the new ways for great expences.

[*Brancha and his Mother discovered standing at a window above.*]

See, an she be not got on purpose now
Into the window to look after me:
I have no power to go now, an I should be hang'd :
Farewell all business! I desire no more
Than I see yonder: let the goods at quay
Look to themselves; why should I toil my youth
out?

It is but begging two or three years sooner,
And stay with her continually: is't a match?
Fie! what a religion have I leap'd into?
Get out again for shame; the man loves best
When his care's most; *that* shows his zeal to love:
Fondness is but the idiot to affection,
That plays at hot-cockles with rich merchants'
wives;

Good to make sport withal when the chest's full,
And the long warehouse cracks. 'Tis time of day
For us to be more wise; 'tis early with us;
And if they lose the morning of their affairs,
They commonly lose the best part of the day:
Those that are wealthy, and have got enough,
'Tis after sunset with 'em; they may rest,
Grow fat with ease, banquet, and toy, and play,
When such as I enter the heat o' th' day,
And I'll do't cheerfully.

Bran. I perceive, sir,
You're not gone yet; I have good hope you'll stay
now.

Léan. Farewell; I must not.

Bran. Come, come, pray return!

To-morrow (adding but a little care more)
Will dispatch all as well ; believe me 'twill, sir.

Leant. I could well wish myself where you
would have me ;

But love that's wanton, must be rul'd awhile
By that that's careful, or all goes to ruin :
As fitting is a government in love,
As in a kingdom ; where 'tis all mere lust,
'Tis like an insurrection in the people
That rais'd, in self-will, wars against all reason ;
But love, that is respective for increase,
Is like a good king, that keeps all in peace.
Once more farewell.

Bran. But this one night, I prithee.

Leant. Alas, I'm in for twenty if I stay,
And then for forty : I have such luck to flesh,
I never bought a horse but he bore double.
If I stay any longer, I shall turn
An everlasting spendthrift ; as you love.
To be maintain'd well, do not call me again,
For then I shall not care which end goes forward :
Again farewell to thee. [*Exit.*

Bran. Since it must ; farewell too.

Moth. 'Faith, daughter, you're to blame : you
take the course
To make him an ill husband ; troth you do ;
And that disease is catching, I can tell you,
Ay, and soon taken by a young man's blood,
And that with little urging : nay fie, see now,
What cause have you to weep ? would I had no
more,
That have liv'd threescore years ; there were a
cause,

And 'twere well thought on; trust me you're to
blame;

His absence cannot last five days at utmost.

Why should those tears be fetch'd forth? cannot
love

Be e'en as well express'd in a good look,

But it must see her face still in a fountain?

It shows like a country maid dressing her head

By a dish of water: Come, 'tis an old custom

To weep for love.

*Enter two or three BOYS, and a CITIZEN or two,
with an APPRENTICE.*

Boys. Now they come, now they come.

2 Boy. The duke.

3 Boy. The states.

Cit. How near, boy?

1 Boy. I' th' next street, sir, hard at hand.

Cit. You, sirrah, get a standing for your mistress,
The best in all the city.

App. I hav't for her, sir;

'Twas a thing I provided for her over night,

'Tis ready at her pleasure.

Cit. Fetch her to't then; away, sir!

Bran. What's the meaning of this hurry,
Can you tell, mother?

Moth. What a memory

Have I! I see by that years come upon me.

Why 'tis a yearly custom and solemnity,

Religiously observ'd by the Duke and States

To St. Mark's temple, the fifteenth of April:

See if my dull brains had not quite forgot it!

'Twas happily question'd of thee, I had gone down
else,

Sat like a drone below, and never thought on't.

I would not to be ten years younger again,

That you had lost the sight! now you shall see

Our Duke; a goodly gentleman of his years.

Bran. Is he old, then?

Moth. About some fifty-five.

Bran. That's no great age in man; he's then at
best

For wisdom, and for judgment.

Moth. The Lord Cardinal,

His noble brother; there's a comely gentleman,

And greater in devotion than in blood.

Bran. He's worthy to be mark'd.

Moth. You shall behold

All our chief states of Florence: you came for-
tunately

Against this solemn day.

Bran. I hope so always. [Music.]

Moth. I hear 'em near us now: do you stand
easily?

Bran. Exceeding well, good mother.

Moth. Take this stool.

Bran. I need it not, I thank you.

Moth. Use your will then.

*Enter in great solemnity six KNIGHTS bare-headed,
then two CARDINALS, and then the LORD CAR-
DINAL, then the DUKE; after him the States of
Florence by two and two, with variety of Music
and Song.* [Exeunt.]

Moth. How like you [it], daughter?

Bran. 'Tis a noble state!

Methinks my soul could dwell upon the reverence
Of such a solemn and most worthy custom.

Did not the Duke look up? methought he saw us.

Moth. That's ev'ry one's conceit that sees a
Duke;

If he look stedfastly, he looks straight at them,

When he, perhaps, good careful gentleman,

Never minds any, but the look he casts,

Is at his own intentions, and his object

Only the public good.

Bran. Most likely so.

Moth. Come, come, we'll end this argument

below, [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter HIPPOLITO, and LADY LIVIA the Widow.

Liv. A strange affection, brother! when I think
on't,

I wonder how thou cam'st by't.

Hip. E'en as easily

As man comes by destruction, which ofttimes
He wears in his own bosom.

Liv. Is the world

So populous in women, and creation
So prodigal in beauty, and so various,
Yet does love turn thy point to thine own blood?
'Tis somewhat too unkindly: must thy eye
Dwell evilly on the fairness of thy kindred,
And seek not where it should? it is confin'd
Now in a narrower prison than was made for't:
It is allow'd a stranger; and where bounty
Is made the great man's honour, 'tis ill husbandry
To spare, and servants shall have small thanks for't;
So he heaven's bounty seems to scorn and mock,
That spares free means, and spends of his own
stock.

Hip. Ne'er was man's misery so soon sow'd up,
Counting how truly.

Liv. Nay, I love you so,
That I shall venture much to keep a change from
you,

So fearful as this grief will bring upon you :
 Faith it even kills me, when I see you faint
 Under a reprehension, and I'll leave it,
 Though I know nothing can be better for you.
 Prithee, sweet brother, let not passion waste
 The goodness of thy time, and of thy fortune :
 Thou keep'st the treasure of that life I love,
 As dearly as mine own ; and if you think
 My former words too bitter, (which were minister'd
 By truth and zeal) 'tis but a hazarding
 Of grace and virtue, and I can bring forth
 As pleasant fruits as sensuality wishes
 In all her teeming longings : this I can do.

Hip. Oh, nothing that can make my wishes
 perfect !

Liv. I would that love of yours were pawn'd to't,
 brother,

And as soon lost that way, as I could win.
 Sir, I could give as shrewd a lift to chastity,
 As any she that wears a tongue in Florence :
 She'd need be a good horsewoman, and sit fast,
 Whom my strong argument could not fling at last.
 Prithee take courage, man ; though I should
 counsel

Another to despair, yet I am pitiful
 To thy afflictions, and will venture hard—
 I will not name for what, it is not handsome ;
 Find you the proof, and praise me.

Hip. Then I fear me,
 I shall not praise you in haste.

Liv. This is the comfort,
 You are not the first, brother, has attempted
 Things more forbidden, than this seems to be :

I'll minister all cordials now to you,
Because I'll cheer you up, sir.

Hip. I am past hope.

Liv. Love, thou shalt see me do a strange cure
then,

As e'er was wrought on a disease so mortal,
And near akin to shame: when shall you see her?

Hip. Never in comfort more.

Liv. You're so impatient too.

Hip. Will you believe? Death! she's forsworn
my company,
And seal'd it with a blush.

Liv. So, I perceive

All lies upon my hands then; well, the more glory
When the work's finish'd. How now, sir, the
news?

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Madam, your niece, the virtuous Isabella,
Is lighted now to see you.

Liv. That's great fortune,
Sir, your stars bless you: Simple! lead her in.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Hip. What's this to me?

Liv. Your absence, gentle brother,
I must bestir my wits for you.

Hip. Ay, to great purpose. [*Exit Hippolito.*]

Liv. Beshrew you! would I lov'd you not so
well!

I'll go to bed, and leave this deed undone:
I am the fondest where I once affect;
The carefull'st of their healths, and of their ease,
forsooth,
That I look still but slenderly to mine own.

I take a course to pity him so much now,
 That I have none left for modesty and myself.
 This 'tis to grow so liberal; you've few sisters
 That love their brother's case 'bove their own ho-
 nesties :

But if you question my affections,
 That will be found my fault. (*Enter ISABELLA.*)
 Niece, your love's welcome.

Alas, what draws that paleness to thy cheeks,
 This enforc'd marriage towards ?

Isab. It helps, good aunt,
 Amongst some other griefs ; but those I'll keep
 Lock'd up in modest silence ; for they're sorrows
 Would shame the tongue, more than they grieve
 the thought.

Liv. Indeed the Ward is simple.

Isab. Simple ! that were well :
 Why one might make good shift with such a hus-
 band,

But he's a fool entail'd, he halts downright in't.

Liv. And knowing this, I hope 'tis at your
 choice

To take or refuse, niece.

Isab. You see it is not.
 I loath him more than beauty can hate death,
 Or age her spiteful neighbour.

Liv. Let 't appear then.

Isab. How can I, being born with that obedience,
 That must submit under a father's will ?
 If he command, I must of force consent.

Liv. Alas, poor soul ! be not offended, prithee,
 If I set by the name of niece awhile,
 And bring in pity in a stranger fashion :
 It lies here in this breast, would cross this match.

Isab. How! cross it, aunt?

Liv. Ay, and give thee more liberty
Than thou hast reason yet to apprehend.

Isab. Sweet aunt, in goodness keep not hid
from me
What may befriend my life.

Liv. Yes, yes, I must
When I return to reputation,
And think upon the solemn vow I made
To your dead mother, my most loving sister;
As long as I've her memory 'twixt mine eyelids
Look for no pity now.

Isab. Kind, sweet, dear aunt——

Liv. No, 'twas a secret, I have took special
care of,
Delivered by your mother on her death bed,
That's nine years now, and I'll not part from 't yet,
Though ne'er was fitter time, nor greater cause for 't.

Isab. As you desire the praises of a virgin——

Liv. Good sorrow! I would do thee any kind-
ness,
Not wronging secrecy or reputation.

Isab. Neither of which (as I have hope of fruit-
fulness)
Shall receive wrong from me.

Liv. Nay, 'twould be your own wrong,
As much as any's, should it come to that once.

Isab. I need no better means to work persua-
sion then.

Liv. Let it suffice, you may refuse this fool,
Or you may take him, as you see occasion
For your advantage; the best wits will do't;
You've liberty enough in your own will,
You cannot be enforc'd; there grows the flow'r,

(If you could pick it out), makes whole life sweet
to you.

That which you call your father's command's no-
thing;

Then your obedience must needs be as little.

If you can make shift here to taste your happiness,
Or pick out ought that likes you, much good do
you:

You see your cheer, I'll make you no set dinner.

Isab. And trust me, I may starve for all the good
I can find yet in this. Sweet aunt, deal plainlier.

Liv. Say, I should trust you now upon an oath,
And give you in a secret that would start you,
How am I sure of you in faith and silence?

Isab. Equal assurance may I find in mercy,
As you for that in me.

Liv. It shall suffice.

Then know, however custom has made good
For reputation's sake, the names of niece
And aunt, 'twixt you and I, we're nothing less.

Isab. How's that?

Liv. I told you I should start your blood:
You are no more ally'd to any of us,
(Save what the courtesy of opinion casts
Upon your mother's memory, and your name),
Than the merest stranger is, or one begot
At Naples, when the husband lies at Rome;
There's so much odds betwixt us. Since your
knowledge

Wish'd more instruction, and I have your oath
In pledge for silence, it makes me talk the freelier.
Did never the report of that fam'd Spaniard,
Marquiss of Coria, since your time was ripe
For understanding, fill your ear with wonder?

Isab. Yes; what of him? I have heard his deeds
of honour

Often related when we liv'd in Naples.

Liv. You heard the praises of your father then.

Isab. My father!

Liv. That was he: but all the business
So carefully and so discreetly carried,
That fame receiv'd no spot by't; not a blemish;
Your mother was so wary to her end,
None knew it but her conscience and her friend,
Till penitent confession made it mine,
And now my pity, yours: it had been long else,
And I hope care and love alike in you,
Made good by oath, will see it take no wrong now:
How weak his commands now, whom you call
father;

How vain all his enforcements, your obedience;
And what a largeness in your will and liberty,
To take, or to reject, or to do both;
For fools will serve to father wise mens' children:
All this you've time to think on. Oh, my wench!
Nothing o'erthrows our sex but indiscretion;
We might do well else of a brittle people,
As any under the great canopy:
I pray forget not but to call me aunt still;
Take heed of that; it may be mark'd in time else;
But keep your thoughts to yourself, from all the
world,

Kind'red, or dearest friend; nay, I entreat you,
From him that all this while you have call'd uncle;
And though you love him dearly, as I know
His deserts claim as much e'en from a stranger,
Yet let not him know this; I prithee do not;
As ever thou hast hope of second-pity,
If thou shouldst stand in need on't, do not do't.

Isab. Believe my oath, I will not.

Liv. Why, well said :

(*Aside.*) Who shows more craft t' undo a maiden-head,

I'll resign my part to her. (*To Hip. as he is entering.*) She's thine own; go.

Enter HIPPOLITO.

Hip. (*To Liv.*) Alas, fair flattery cannot cure my sorrows! [*Exit Livia.*

Isab. (*Aside.*) Have I past so much time in ignorance,

And never had the means to know myself
Till this bless'd hour? thanks to her virtuous pity
That brought it now to light; would I had known it
But one day sooner, he had then receiv'd
In favours, what (poor gentleman) he took
In bitter words; a slight and harsh reward
For one of his deserts.

Hip. (*Aside.*) There seems to me now
More anger and distraction in her looks:
I'm gone, I'll not endure a second storm;
The memory of the first is not pass'd yet.

Isab. (*Aside.*) Are you return'd, you comforts
of my life?

In this man's presence, I will keep you fast now,
And sooner part eternally from the world,
Than my good joys in you. (*To Hip.*) Prithee
forgive me,

I did but chide in jest; the best loves use it
Sometimes; it sets an edge upon affection.
When we invite our best friends to a feast,
'Tis not all sweetmeats that we set before them;
There's somewhat sharp and salt, both to whet
appetite,

And make 'em taste their wine well : so, methinks,
 After a friendly, sharp, and savory chiding,
 A kiss tastes wondrous well, and full o' th' grape :
 How think'st thou, does 't not? [*Kisses him.*]

Hip. 'Tis so excellent,
 I know not how to praise it, what to say to't.

Isab. This marriage shall go forward.

Hip. With the Ward?

Are you in earnest?

Isab. 'Twould be ill for us else.

Hip. (*Aside.*) For us! how means she that?

Isab. Troth, I begin

To be so well methinks, within this hour,
 For all this match, able to kill one's heart ;
 Nothing can pull me down now ; should my father
 Provide a worse fool yet (which I should think
 Were a hard thing to compass) I'd have him either,
 The worse the better ; none can come amiss now,
 If he want wit enough : so discretion love me,
 Desert and judgment, I have content sufficient !
 She that comes once to be a housekeeper,
 Must not look every day to fare well, sir,
 Like a young waiting-gentlewoman in service,
 For she feeds commonly as her lady does ;
 No good bit passes her, but she gets a taste on't :
 But when she comes to keep house for herself,
 She's glad of some choice cates then once a week,
 Or twice at most, and glad if she can get 'em :
 So must affection learn to fare with thankfulness.
 Pray make your love no stranger, sir, that's all,
 (*Aside.*) Though you be one yourself, and know
 not on't ;

And I have sworn you must not. [*Exit.*]

Hip. This is beyond me !

Never came joys so unexpectedly
 To meet desires in man! how came she thus?
 What has she done to her; can any tell?
 'Tis beyond sorcery this, drugs, or love-powders;
 Some art that has no name sure; strange to me
 Of all the wonders I e'er met withal
 Throughout my ten years travels; but I'm thank-
 ful for't.

This marriage now must of necessity forward;
 It is the only veil wit can devise
 To keep our acts hid from sin-piercing eyes.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

LIVIA'S *House.* *A Chess Board is set out.* *Enter*
 GUARDIANO *and* LIVIA.

Liv. How, sir, a gentlewoman so young, so fair,
 As you set forth, spy'd from the widow's window?

Guard. She!

Liv. Our Sunday-dinner woman?

Guard. And Thursday supper-woman; the
 same still.

I know not how she came by her, but I'll swear
 She's the prime gallant for a face in Florence;
 And no doubt other parts follow their leader.
 The Duke himself first spy'd her at the window;
 Then in a rapture (as if admiration
 Were poor when it were single) beck'ned me,
 And pointed to the wonder warily,
 As one that fear'd she would draw in her splendour
 Too soon, if too much gaz'd at: I ne'er knew him
 So infinitely taken with a woman;

Nor can I blame his appetite, or tax
 His raptures of slight folly ; she's a creature
 Able to draw a state from serious business,
 And make it their best piece to do her service.
 What course shall we devise ? 'has spoke twice
 now.

Liv. Twice?

Guard. 'Tis beyond your apprehension,
 How strangely that one look has catch'd his heart:
 'Twould prove but too much worth in wealth and
 favour

To those should work his peace.

Liv. And if I do't not,
 Or at least come as near it (if your art
 Will take a little pains and second me)
 As any wench in Florence of my standing,
 I'll quite give o'er, and shut up shop in cunning.

Guard. 'Tis for the Duke; and if I fail your
 purpose
 All means to come by riches or advancement,
 Miss me, and skip me over.

Liv. Let the old woman then
 Be sent for with all speed, then I'll begin.

Guard. A good conclusion follow, and a sweet
 one,
 After this stale beginning with old ware.
 Within there !

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir, do you call?

Guard. Come near, list hither. [*Whispers.*

Liv. I long myself to see this absolute creature,
 That wins the heart of love, and praise so much.

Guard. Go, sir, make haste.

Liv. Say I entreat her company :

Do you hear, sir?

Serv. Yes, madam.

[*Exit.*

Liv. That brings her quickly.

Guard. I would 'twere done ; the Duke waits
the good hour,

And I wait the good fortune that may spring from't.

I have had a lucky hand these fifteen year

At such court passage* with three dice in a dish.

Signior Fabritio !

Enter FABRITIO.

Fab. Oh, sir, I bring an alteration in my mouth
now.

Guard. An alteration ! (*Aside.*) No wise speech,
I hope ;

He means not to talk wisely, does he trow ?

Good ! what's the change, I pray, sir ?

Fab. A new change.

Guard. Another yet ! faith there's enough al-
ready.

Fab. My daughter loves him now.

Guard. What does she, sir ?

Fab. Affects him beyond thought : who but the
Ward forsooth !

No talk but of the Ward ! she would have him

To choose 'bove all the men she ever saw !

My will goes not so fast as her consent now ;

Her duty gets before my command still.

* *Passage* was a very common game in our poet's time. " It is a game at dice to be played at but by two, and it is performed with three dice. The caster throws continually till he hath thrown dubblets under ten, and then he is out and loseth ; or dubblets above ten, and then he *passeth* and wins."

Guard. Why then, sir, if you'll have me speak
my thoughts,
I smell 'twill be a match.

Fab. Ay, and a sweet young couple,
If I have any judgment.

Guard. *(Aside.)* Faith that's little:
Let her be sent to-morrow, before noon,
And handsomely trick'd up ; for 'bout that time
I mean to bring her in, and tender her to him.

Fab. I warrant you for handsome ; I will see
Her things laid ready, every one in order,
And have some part of her trick'd up to-night.

Guard. Why, well said.

Fab. 'Twas a use her mother had ;
When she was invited to an early wedding,
She'd dress her head o'er night, sponge up herself,
And give her neck three lathers.

Guard. *(Aside.)* Ne'er a halter ?

Fab. On with her chain of pearl, her ruby
bracelets,
Lay ready all her tricks and jigembobs.

Guard. So must your daughter.

Fab. I'll about it straight, sir. [*Exit Fab.*]

Liv. How he sweats in the foolish zeal of father-
hood,
After six ounces an hour, and seems

To toil as much as if his cares were wise ones !

Guard. You've let his folly blood in the right
vein, lady.

Liv. And here comes his sweet son-in-law that
shall be ;
They're both ally'd in wit before the marriage ;
What will they be hereafter when they are nearer ?
Yet they can go no further than the fool ;
There's the world's end in both of 'em.

Enter WARD and SORDIDO, one with a Shittlecock, the other a Battledoor.

Guard. Now, young heir:

Ward. What's the next business after shittlecock, now?

Guard. To-morrow you shall see the gentlewoman

Must be your wife.

Ward. There's e'en another thing too
Must be kept up with a pair of battledoors.

My wife! what can she do?

Guard. Nay, that's a question you should ask yourself, Ward,

When you're alone together.

Ward. That's as I list:

A wife's to be ask'd any where, I hope:

I'll ask her in a congregation, if I have a mind to't, and so save a licence: my guardiner has no more wit than an herb-woman, that sells away all her sweet herbs and nosegays, and keeps a stinking breath for her own pottage.

Sord. Let me be at the choosing of your beloved, If you desire a woman of good parts.

Ward. Thou shalt, sweet Sordido.

Sord. I have a plaguy guess; let me alone to see what she is; if I but look upon her—'way! I know all the faults to a hair, that you may refuse her for.

Ward. Dost thou? I prithee let me here 'em, Sordido.

Sord. Well, mark 'em then: I have 'em all in rhyme.

The wife your guardiner ought to tender,
 Should be pretty, straight and slender;
 Her hair not short, her foot not long,
 Her hand not huge, nor too too loud her tongue:
 No pearl in eye, nor ruby in her nose;
 No burn or cut, but what the catalogue shows.
 She must have teeth, and that no black ones,
 And kiss inost sweet when she does smack once:
 Her skin must be both white and plump;
 Her body straight, not hopper-rump'd,
 Or wriggle sideways like a crab:
 She must be neither slut nor drab,
 Nor go too splay-foot with her shoes,
 To make her smock lick up the dews:
 And two things more, which I forgot to tell ye,
 She neither must have bump in back, nor belly.
 These are the faults that will not make her pass.

Ward. And if I spy not these, I am a rank ass.

Sord. Nay more; by right, sir, you should see
 her naked;

For that's the ancient order.

Ward. See her naked?

That were good sport, i'faith: I'll have the books
 turn'd over;

And if I find her naked on record*,

She shall not have a rag on: but stay, stay,

How if she should desire to see me so too?

I were in a sweet case then; such a foul skin.

Sord. But you've a clean shirt, and that makes
 amends, sir.

Ward. I will not see her naked for that trick
 though.

[*Exit.*

* *i. e.* If I discover there, that it is the custom for ladies to be
 so seen previously to marriage.

Sord. Then take her with all faults with her clothes on!

And they may hide a number with a bum-roll.
 'Faith, choosing of a wench in a huge farthingale,
 Is like the buying of ware under a great penthouse;
 What with the deceit of one,
 And the false light of th' other, mark my speeches,
 He may have a diseas'd wench in's bed,
 And rotten stuff in's breeches. [*Exit.*

Guard. It may take handsomely.

[*Guard. goes out and returns almost immediately.*

Liv. I see small hind'rance.
 How now! so soon return'd?

Enter MOTHER.

Guard. She's come.

Liv. That's well.

Widow, come, come, I have a great quarrel to you:
 Faith I must chide you, that you must be sent for.
 You make yourself so strange, never come at us;
 And yet so near a neighbour, and so unkind:
 Troth, you're to blame; you cannot be more welcome

To any house in Florence, that I'll tell you.

Moth. My thanks must needs acknowledge so much, madam.

Liv. How can you be so strange then? I sit here
 Sometimes whole days together without company,
 When business draws this gentleman from home;
 And should be happy in society,
 Which I so well affect, as that of yours.
 I know you're alone too; why should not we,

Like two kind neighbours, then, supply the wants
Of one another, having tongue discourse,
Experience in the world, and such kind helps
To laugh down time, and meet age merrily*?

Moth. Age, madam, you speak mirth; 'tis at
my door,

But a long journey from your ladyship yet.

Liv. My faith, I'm nine-and-thirty; ev'ry stroke,
wench;

And 'tis a general observation
'Mongst knights, wives or widows, we account
ourselves

Then old, when young mens' eyes leave looking at's:

'Tis a true rule amongst us, and ne'er fail'd yet

In any but in one, that I remember;

Indeed *she* had a friend at nine-and-forty;

Marry, she paid well for him; and in th' end

He kept a quean or two with her own money;

That robb'd her of her plate, and cut her throat.

Moth. She had her punishment in this world,
madam,

And a fair warning to all other women,

That they live chaste at fifty.

Liv. Ay, or never, wench.

Come, now I have thy company I'll not part with't
Till after supper.

Moth. Yes, I must crave pardon, madam.

Liv. I swear you shall stay supper; we have
no strangers, woman;

None but my sojourners and I; this gentleman

And the young heir, his ward; you know our
company.

* "Meerly" is the reading of the original.

Moth. Some other time I will make bold with you, madam.

Guard. Nay, pray stay, widow.

Liv. Faith, she shall not go :

Do you think I'll be forsworn ?

Moth. 'Tis a great while

Till supper time ; I'll take my leave then now, madam,

And come again i' th' evening, since your ladyship Will have it so.

Liv. I' th' evening ? by my troth, wench, I'll keep you while I have you ; you have great business sure

To sit alone at home : I wonder strangely What pleasure you take in't ! were 't to me now I should be ever at one neighbour's house Or other all day long ; having no charge, Or none to chide you, if you go or stay, Who may live merrier, ay, or more at heart's ease ?

Come, we'll to chess, or draughts ; there are an hundred tricks

To drive out time till supper, never fear't, wench.

Moth. I'll but make one step home, and return straight, madam.

Liv. Come, I'll not trust you ; you use more excuses

To your kind friends than ever I knew any. What business can you have, if you be sure You've lock'd the doors ? and, that being all you have,

I know you're careful on't : one afternoon So much to spend here ! say I should entreat you now

To lie a night or two, or a week, with me,
 Or leave you own house for a month together;
 It were a kindness that long neighbourhood
 And friendship might well hope to prevail in:
 Would you deny such a request, i'faith?
 Speak truth, and freely.

Moth. I were then uncivil, madam.

Liv. Go to then, set your men; (*pointing to
 the chess-board.*) we'll have whole nights
 Of mirth together, ere we be much older, wench.

Moth. (*Aside.*) As good now, tell her then, for
 she will know't;

I have always found her a most friendly lady.

Liv. Why, widow, where's your mind?

Moth. Troth, e'en at home, madam.

To tell you truth, I left a gentlewoman
 E'en sitting all alone, which is uncomfortable,
 Especially to young bloods.

Liv. Another excuse.

Moth. No; as I hope for health, madam, that's
 a truth;

Please you to send and see.

Liv. What gentlewoman? pish!

Moth. Wife to my son, indeed; but not known,
 madam,

To any but yourself.

Liv. Now I beshrew you:

Could you be so unkind to her and me,
 To come and not bring her? Faith, 'tis not friendly.

Moth. I fear'd to be too bold.

Liv. Too bold! Oh, what's become
 Of the true hearty love was wont to be
 'Mongst neighbours in old time?

Moth. And she's a stranger, madam.

Liv. The more should be her welcome: when
is courtesy

In better practice, than when 'tis employ'd
In entertaining strangers? I could chide, i'faith!
Leave her behind, poor gentlewoman! alone too!
Make some amends, and send for her betimes; go.

Moth. Please you command one of your ser-
vants, madam.

Liv. Within there!

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Madam.

Liv. Attend the gentlewoman.

Moth. (*Aside.*) It must be carried wondrous
privately

From my son's knowledge, he'll break out in
storms else.

Hark you, sir. [*Whispers the Servant.*

Liv. (*Aside to Guard.*) Now comes in the heat
of your part.

Guard. True, I know it, lady; and if I be out,
May the Duke banish me from all employments,
Wanton, or serious.

Liv. So; have you sent, widow?

Moth. Yes, madam, he's almost at home by this.

Liv. And 'faith let me entreat you, that hence
forward

All such unkind faults may be swept from friend-
ship,

Which does but dim the lustre; and think thus
much,

It is a wrong to me, that have ability

To bid friends welcome, when you keep 'em
from me;

You cannot set greater dishonour near me;
 For bounty is the credit and the glory
 Of those that have enough: I see you're sorry,
 And the good 'mends is made by't.

Moth. Here's she 's, madam!

Enter BRANCHA and SERVANT.

Bran. (Aside.) I wonder how she comes to
 send for me now?

Liv. Gentlewoman, you're most welcome, trust
 me you are,

As courtesy can make one, or respect
 Due to the presence of you.

Bran. I give you thanks, lady.

Liv. I heard you were alone, and 't had appear'd
 An ill condition in me, though I knew you not,
 Nor ever saw you, (yet humanity
 Thinks ev'ry case her own) to have kept your
 company

Here from you, and left you all solitary:

I rather ventur'd upon boldness then,

As the least fault, and wish'd your presence here;

A thing most happily motion'd of that gentleman,

Whom I request you, for his care and pity,

To honour and reward with your acquaintance,

A gentleman that ladies' rights stands for;

That's his profession.

Bran. 'Tis a noble one, and honours my ac-
 quaintance.

Guard. All my intentions are servants to such
 mistresses.

Bran. 'Tis your modesty,
 It seems, that makes your deserts speak so low, sir.

Liv. Come, widow : (to *Bran.*) look you, lady,
here's our business ;

[*Pointing to the chess-board.*]

Are we not well employ'd, think you? an old
quarrel

Between us, that will never be at an end.

Bran. No? and methinks there's men enough
to part you, lady.

Liv. Ho! but they set us on, let us come off
As well as we can, poor souls, men care no farther.
I pray sit down, forsooth, if you have the patience
To look upon two weak and tedious gamesters.

Guard. Faith, madam, set these by till evening,
You'll have enough on't then ; the gentlewoman,
Being a stranger, would take more delight
To see your rooms and pictures.

Liv. Marry, good sir,
And well remember'd ; I beseech you show 'em her ;
That will beguile time well ; pray heartily do, sir,
I'll do as much for you : here, take these keys ;
Shew her the monument too ; and that's a thing
Every one sees not ; you can witness that, widow.

Moth. And that's worth sight indeed, madam.

Bran. Kind lady,
I fear I came to be a trouble to you.

Liv. Oh, nothing less, forsooth.

Bran. And to this courteous gentleman,
That wears a kindness in his breast so noble
And bounteous to the welcome of a stranger.

Guard. If you but give acceptance to my service,
You do the greatest grace and honour to me
That courtesy can merit.

Bran. I were to blame else,
And out of fashion much. I pray you lead, sir.

Liv. After a game or two we're for you, gentlefolks.

Guard. We wish no better seconds in society Than your discourses, madam, and your partner's there.

Moth. I thank your praise, I listen'd to you, sir; Though when you spoke, there came a paltry rook Full in my way, and chok'd up all my game.

[*Exit Guard. and Bran.*]

Liv. Alas, poor widow, I shall be too hard for thee.

Moth. You're cunning at the game, I'll be sworn, madam.

Liv. It will be found so ere I give you over: She that can place her man well——

Moth. As you do, madam.

Liv. As I shall, wench, can never lose her game: Nay, nay, the black king's mine.

Moth. Cry you mercy, madam!

Liv. And this my queen.

Moth. I see't now.

Liv. Here's a duke*

Will strike a sure stroke for the game anon;
Your pawn cannot come back to relieve itself.

Moth. I know that, madam.

* It appears from the following passage in our poet's "Game of Chess," that the pieces now called *rooks*, were sometimes formerly called *dukes*.

Error. There's the full number of the game;
Kings and their pawns, queens, bishops,
Knights, and *dukes*.

Ign. *Dukes? they're called rookes by some.*

Error. Corruptively;
Le Roch the word, *Custodié de la Roch*,
The Keeper of the Forts.

Liv. You play well the whilst :
How she belies her skill ! I hold two ducats,
I give you check and mate to your white king,
Simplicity itself, your saintish king there.

Moth. Well, ere now, lady,
I have seen the fall of subtlety : jest on.

Liv. Ay, but simplicities receives two for one.

Moth. What remedy but patience !

Enter GUARDIANO *and* BRANCHA *in a Gallery*
above.

Bran. Trust me, sir,
Mine eye ne'er met with fairer ornaments.

Guard Nay, livelier, I'm persuaded, neither
Florence

Nor Venice can produce.

Bran. Sir, my opinion
Takes your part highly.

Guard. There's a better piece
Yet than all these. [*Duke discovered.*]

Bran. Not possible, sir !

Guard. Believe it
You'll say so when you see't : turn but your eye
now

You're upon't presently. [*Exit.*]

Bran. Oh, sir !

Duke. He's gone, beauty.
Pish ! look not after him : he's but a vapour,
That when the sun appears is seen no more.

[*He takes hold of her.*]

Bran. Oh, treachery to honour !

Duke. Prithee tremble not :
I feel thy breast shake like a turtle panting

Under a loving hand that makes much on't.
 Why art so fearful? as I'm friend to brightness,
 There's nothing but respect and honour near thee:
 You know me, you have seen me; here's a heart
 Can witness I have seen thee.

Bran. The more's my danger.

Duke. The more's thy happiness. Pish! strive
 not, sweet;

[*She struggles to get from him.*]

This strength were excellent employ'd in love now;
 But here 'tis spent amiss: strive not to seek
 Thy liberty, and keep me still in prison:
 I'faith you shall not out, till I'm releas'd now;
 We'll be both freed together, or stay still by't;
 So is captivity pleasant.

Bran. Oh, my lord!

Duke. I am not here in vain; have but the lei-
 sure

To think on that, and thou'lt be soon resolv'd:
 The lifting of thy voice is but like one
 That does exalt his enemy; who proving high,
 Lays all the plots to confound him that rais'd him.
 Take warning, I beseech thee: thou seem'st to me
 A creature so compos'd of gentleness,
 And delicate meekness; such as bless the faces
 Of figures that are drawn for goddesses,
 And makes art proud to look upon her work:
 I should be sorry the least force should lay
 An unkind touch upon thee.

Bran. Oh, my extremity!

My lord, what seek you?

Duke. Love.

Bran. 'Tis gone already;

I have a husband.

Duke. That's a single comfort;
Take a friend to him.

Bran. That's a double mischief,
Or else there's no religion.

Duke. Do not tremble
At fears of thine own making.

Bran. Nor, great lord,
Make me not bold with death and deeds of ruin,
Because they fear not you: me they must fright;
Then am I best in health; should thunder speak,
And none regard it, it had lost the name,
And were as good be still. I'm not like those
That take their soundest sleeps in greatest tem-
pests;
Then wake I most, the weather fearfullest,
And call for strength to virtue.

Duke. Sure I think
Thou know'st the way to please me. I affect
A passionate pleading 'bove an easy yielding;
But never pitied any, they deserve none
That will not pity me: I can command;
Think upon that: yet if thou truly knewest
The infinite pleasure my affection takes
In gentle, fair entreatings, when love's businesses
Are carried courteously 'twixt heart and heart,
You'd make more haste to please me.

Bran. Why should you seek, sir,
To take away that you cannot give?

Duke. But I give better in exchange; wealth,
honour:

She that is fortunate in a duke's favour,
'Lights on a tree that bears all womens' wishes:
If your own mother saw you pluck fruit there,
She would commend your wit, and praise the time

Of your nativity: take hold of glory.
 Do not I know you've cast away your life
 Upon necessities, means merely doubtful
 To keep you in indifferent health and fashion,
 (A thing I heard too lately, and soon pitied!)
 And can you be so much your beauty's enemy,
 To kiss away a month or two in wedlock,
 And weep whole years in wants for ever after?
 Come, play the wise wench, and provide for ever:
 Let storms come when they list, they find thee
 shelter'd.
 Should any doubt arise, let nothing trouble thee;
 Put trust in our love for the managing
 Of all to thy heart's peace. We'll walk together,
 And show a thankful joy for both our fortunes.

[*Exit above.*]

Liv. Did not I say my duke would fetch you
 over, widow*?

Moth. I think you spoke in earnest when you
 said it, madam.

Liv. And my black king makes all the haste
 he can too.

Moth. Well, madam, we may meet with him
 in time yet.

Liv. I have given thee blind mate twice.

Moth. You may see, madam,
 My eyes begin to fail.

Liv. I'll swear they do, wench.

* It appears that what passed between the Duke and Brancha was all seen by Livia; and as the resistance of the latter seems to have been sincere, it cannot but seem strange that her opposition should not be such as to alarm her mother-in-law; but our poet, like many of his contemporaries, has crowded too many material incidents into his piece to render all of them probable and consistent.

Enter GUARDIANO.

Guard. (*Aside.*) I can but smile as often as I think on't!

How prettily the poor fool was beguil'd ;

How unexpectedly : it's a witty age !

Never were finer snares for womens' honesties

Than are devis'd in these days ; no spider's web's

Made of a daintier thread, than are now practis'd

To catch love's flesh-fly by the silver wing :

Yet, to prepare her stomach by degrees

To Cupid's feast, because I saw 'twas quezy,

I shew'd her naked pictures by the way ;

A bit to stay the appetite. Well, advancement,

I venture hard to find thee : if thou com'st

With a greater title set upon thy crest,

I'll take that first cross patiently, and wait

Until some other comes greater than that :

I'll endure all.

Liv. The game's e'en at the best now : you may

see, widow,

How all things draw to an end.

Moth. E'en so do I, madam.

Liv. I pray take some of your neighbours along

with you.

Moth. They must be those are almost twice

your years then,

If they be chose fit matches for my time, madam.

Liv. Has not my Duke bestir'd himself ?

Moth. Yes faith, madam ; 'has done me all the

mischief in this game.

Liv. 'Has shew'd himself in's kind.

Moth. In's kind, call you it ?

I may swear that.

Liv. Yes, faith, and keep your oath.

Guard. (Aside.) Hark! list! there's somebody coming down: 'tis she.

Enter BRANCHA.

Bran. (Aside.) Now bless me from a blasting!

I saw that now,

Fearful for any woman's eye to look on;

Infectious mists and mill-dews hang at's eyes;

The weather of a doomsday dwells upon him.

Yet since mine honour's leprous, why should I

Preserve that fair that caus'd the leprosy?

Come, poison all at once. *(To Guard.)* Thou, in whose baseness

The bane of virtue broods, I'm bound in soul

Eternally to curse thy smooth-brow'd treachery,

That wore the fair veil of a friendly welcome,

And I a stranger; think upon't, 'tis worth it;

Murders pil'd up upon a guilty spirit;

At his last breath will not lie heavier

Than this betraying act upon thy conscience:

Beware of off'ring the first-fruits to sin:

His weight is deadly who commits with strumpets,

After they have been abas'd, and made for use;

If *they* offend to th' death, as wise men know,

How much more they than that first make 'em so:

I give thee that to feed on: I'm made bold now,

I thank thy treachery; sin and I'm acquainted,

No couple greater; and I'm like that great one,

Who making politic use of a base villain,

He likes the treason well, but hates the traitor;

So I hate thee, slave!

Guard. Well, so the Duke love me,

I fare not much amiss then; two great feasts

Do seldom come together in one day ;
We must not look for 'em.

Bran. What, at it still, mother?

Moth. You see we sit by't: are you so soon
return'd?

Liv. (*Aside.*) So lively, and so cheerful ; a good
sign that.

Moth. You have not seen all since, sure?

Bran. That have I, mother,
The monument and all: I'm so beholding
To this kind, honest, courteous gentleman,
You'd little think it, mother; show'd me all;
Had me from place to place so fashionably;
The kindness of some people, how 't exceeds!
'Faith, I have seen that I little thought to see,
I, th' morning when I rose.

Moth. Nay, so I told you
Before you saw't, it would prove worth your sight.
I give you great thanks for my daughter, sir,
And all your kindness towards her.

Guard. Oh! good widow,
Much good may do her; (*aside*) forty weeks
hence, i'faith.

Enter SERVANT.

Liv. Now, sir.

Serv. May't please you, madam, to walk in;
Supper's upon the table.

Liv. Yes, we come:
Will't please you, gentlewoman?

Bran. Thanks, virtuous lady;
(*Aside to Liv.*) You're a damn'd bawd—I'll fol-
low you forsooth;

Pray take my mother in; (*aside*), an old ass go with you;—

This gentleman and I vow not to part.

Liv. Then get you both before.

Bran. There lies his art. [*Exeunt.*

Liv. Widow, I'll follow you. Is't so! *damn'd bawd!*

Are you so bitter? 'Tis but want of use:

Her tender modesty is sea-sick a little,

Being not accustom'd to the breaking billow

Of woman's wavering faith, blown with temptations.

'Tis but a qualm of honour, 'twill away;

A little bitter for the time, but lasts not.

Sin tastes at the first draught like wormwood water;

But drunk again, 'tis nectar ever after. [*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter MOTHER.

Moth. I would my son would either keep at home,
 Or I were in my grave!
 She was but one day abroad, but ever since
 She's grown so cutted*, there's no speaking to her:
 Whether the sight of great cheer at my lady's,
 And such mean fare at home, work discontent in
 her,
 I know not; but I'm sure she's strangely alter'd.
 I'll ne'er keep daughter-in-law i' th' house with me
 Again, if I had an hundred. When read I of any
 That agreed long together? but she and her mother
 Fell out in the first quarter; nay, sometime
 A grudging of a scolding the first week, by'r lady!
 So takes the new disease methinks in my house;
 I'm weary of my part; there's nothing likes her †;
 I know not how to please her here o' late:
 And here she comes.

Enter BRANCHA.

Bran. This is the strangest house
 For all defects as ever gentlewoman
 Made shift withal, to pass away her love in.
 Why is there not a cushion-cloth of drawn work,

* "Cutted"—cross, querulous. † *i. e.* Pleases her.

Or some fair cut-work pin'd up in my bed-chamber?
 A silver and gilt casting bottle* hung by't?
 Nay, since I am content to be so kind to you,
 To spare you for a silver bason and ewer,
 Which one of my fashion looks for of duty;
 She's never offer'd under where she sleeps.

Moth. She talks of things here my whole 'state's
 not worth.

Bran. Never a green silk quilt is there i' th'
 house, mother,
 To cast upon my bed?

Moth. No, by troth, is there;
 Nor orange tawny neither.

Bran. Here's a house
 For a young gentlewoman to be got with child in.

Moth. Yes, simple though you make it, there
 has been three

Got in a year in't, since you move me to't,
 And all as sweet-fac'd children, and as lovely
 As you'll be mother of; I will not spare you!

What, cannot children be begot, think you,
 Without gilt casting bottles? yes, and as sweet
 ones.

The miller's daughter brings forth as white boys,
 As she that bathes herself with milk and bean
 flower.

'Tis an old saying, *One may keep good cheer*
In a mean house; so may true love affect
 After the rate of princes in a cottage.

Bran. Troth, you speak wondrous well for your
 old house here:

* The stage direction in "Antonio and Mellida," vol. ii. p. 150, sufficiently explains the nature of these "casting bottles."

'Twill shortly fall down at your feet to thank you,
 Or stoop, when you go to bed, like a good child,
 To ask you blessing. Must I live in want,
 Because my fortune match'd me with your son ?
 Wives do not give away themselves to husbands,
 To the end to be quite cast away ; they look
 To be the better us'd, and tender'd rather,
 Highlier respected, and maintain'd the richer ;
 They're well rewarded else for the free gift
 Of their whole life to a husband. I ask less now
 Than what I had at home when I was a maid,
 And at my father's house, kept short of that
 Which a wife knows she must have, nay, and will ;
 Will, mother, if she be not a fool born ;
 And report went of me, that I could wrangle
 For what I wanted when I was two hours old ;
 And by that copy, this land still I hold*.

You hear me, mother.

[*Exit.*

Moth. Ay, too plain, methinks ;
 And were I somewhat deafer when you spake,
 'Twere ne'er a whit the worse for my quietness :
 'Tis the most sudden'st, strangest alteration,
 And the most subtlest that e'er wit at threescore
 Was puzzled to find out : I know no cause for't, but
 She's no more like the gentlewoman at first,
 Than I am like her that ne'er lay with man yet ;
 And she's a very young thing where'er she be :
 When she first 'lighted here, I told her then
 How mean she should find all things ; she was
 pleas'd, forsooth,
 None better : I laid open all defects to her,
 She was contented still ; but the devil's in her,
 Nothing contents her now. To night my son

* *i. e.* I can only preserve my rank and privileges by being able to contend for them.

Promis'd to be at home; would he were come once,
 For I'm weary of my charge, and life too :
 She'd be serv'd all in silver by her good will,
 By night and day; she hates the name of pewterer,
 More than sick men the noise, or diseas'd bones
 That quake at fall o' th' hammer, seeming to have
 A fellow-feeling with 't at every blow.

What course shall I think on? she frets me so *.

[*Exit.*

Enter LEANTIO.

Lean. How near am I now to a happiness
 That earth exceeds not! not another like it:
 The treasures of the deep are not so precious,
 As are the conceal'd comforts of a man
 Lock'd up in woman's love. I scent the air
 Of blessings when I come but near the house:
 What a delicious breath marriage sends forth!
 The violet-bed's not sweeter. Honest wedlock
 Is like a banqueting-house built in a garden,
 On which the spring's chaste flowers take delight
 To cast their modest odours; when base lust,
 With all her powders, paintings, and best pride,
 Is but a fair house built by a ditch side.
 When I behold a glorious dangerous strumpet,
 Sparkling in beauty and destruction too,
 Both at a twinkling, I do liken straight
 Her beautify'd body to a goodly temple
 That's built on vaults where carcasses lie rotting,
 And so, by little and little, I shrink back again,
 And quench desire with a cool meditation;

* I have removed the Mother from the stage during Leantio's speech, because Brancha is marked as having retired, and they both appear, without any stage direction, immediately that Leantio concludes.

And I'm as well methinks. Now for a welcome
 Able to draw mens' envies upon man:
 A kiss now that will hang upon my lip,
 As sweet as morning dew upon a rose,
 And full as long; after a five days fast
 She'll be so greedy now, and cling about me;
 I take care how I shall be rid of her;
 And here't begins.

Enter BRANCHA and MOTHER.

Bran. Oh, sir, you're welcome home.

Moth. Oh, is he come? I am glad on't.

Lean. (*Aside.*) Is that all?

Why this is * dreadful now as sudden death
 To some rich man, that flatters all his sins
 With promise of repentance when he's old,
 And dies in the midway before he comes to't.
 Sure you're not well, Brancha! How dost, prithee?

Bran. I have been better than I am at this
 time.

Lean. Alas, I thought so.

Bran. Nay, I have been worse too,
 Than now you see me, sir.

Lean. I'm glad thou mendst yet,
 I feel my heart mend too. How came it to thee?
 Has any thing dislik'd thee in my absence?

Bran. No, certain, I have had the best content
 That Florence can afford.

Lean. Thou makest the best on't:
 Speak, mother, what's the cause? you must needs
 know.

* "Why this? as dreadful now," &c. is the original.

Moth. Troth I know none, son; let her speak herself;

Unless it be the same 'gave Lucifer a tumbling cast; that's pride.

Bran. Methinks this house stands nothing to my mind;

I'd have some pleasant lodging i' th' high street, sir; Or if 'twere near the court, sir, that were much better;

'Tis a sweet recreation for a gentlewoman To stand in a bay-window, and see gallants.

Lean. Now I have another temper, a mere stranger

To that of yours, it seems; I should delight To see none but yourself.

Bran. I praise not that;

Too fond is as unseemly as too churlish:

I would not have a husband of that proneness,

To kiss me before company, for a world:

Beside, 'tis tedious to see one thing still, sir,

Be it the best that ever heart affected;

Nay, were't yourself, whose love had power you know

To bring me from my friends, I would not stand thus,

And gaze upon you always; troth, I could not, sir;

As good be blind, and have no use of sight,

As look on one thing still: what's the eye's treasure,

But change of objects? You are learned, sir,

And know I speak not ill; 'tis* full as virtuous

For woman's eye to look on several men,

As for her heart, sir, to be fixed on one.

* The original reads, "till full as virtuous."

Lean. Now thou come'st home to me ; a kiss
for that word.

Bran. No matter for a kiss, sir ; let it pass ;
'Tis but a toy, we'll not so much as mind it ;
Let's talk of other business, and forget it.
What news now of the pirates ? any stirring ?
Prithee discourse a little.

Moth. (*Aside.*) I am glad he's here yet
To see her tricks himself ; I had lied monst'rously
If I had told 'em first.

Lean. Speak, what's the humour, sweet,
You make your lip so strange ? this was not wont.

Bran. Is there no kindness betwixt man and wife,
Unless they make a pigeon-house of friendship,
And be still billing ? 'tis the idlest fondness
That ever was invented ; and 'tis pity
It's grown a fashion for poor gentlewomen ;
There's many a disease kiss'd in a year by't,
And a French court'sy made to't : Alas, sir,
Think of the world, how we shall live, grow se-
rious ;
We have been married a whole fortnight now.

Lean. How ? a whole fortnight ! why, is that
so long ?

Bran. 'Tis time to leave off dalliance ; 'tis a
doctrine
Of your own teaching, if you be remember'd,
And I was bound to obey it.

Moth. (*Aside.*) Here's one fits him ;
This was well catch'd i'faith, son, like a fellow
That rids another country of a plague,
And brings it home with him to his own house :

[*Knocking within.*

Who knocks ?

Lean. Who's there now? Withdraw you,
Brancha;

Thou art a gem no stranger's eye must see,
Howe'er thou pleas'd now to look dull on me.

[*Exit Brancha.*]

Enter MESSENGER.

You're welcome, sir: to whom your business, pray?

Mess. To one I see not here now.

Lean. Who should that be, sir?

Mess. A young gentlewoman, I was sent to.

Lean. A young gentlewoman?

Mess. Ay, sir, about sixteen: why look you
wildly, sir?

Lean. At your strange error: you've mistook
the house, sir;

There's none such here, I assure you.

Mess. I assure you too,

The man that sent me cannot be mistook.

Lean. Why, who is't sent you, sir?

Mess. The Duke.

Lean. The Duke?

Mess. Yes, he entreats her company at a banquet
At Lady Livia's house.

Lean. Troth, shall I tell you, sir,

It is the most erroneous business,

That e'er your honest pains was abus'd with:

I pray forgive me if I smile a little,

I cannot choose i'faith, sir, at an error

So comical as this, (I mean no harm though);

His grace has been most wondrous ill inform'd,

Pray so return it, sir. What should her name be?

Mess. That I shall tell you straight too,—

Brancha Capella.

Lean. How, sir! Brancha? What do you call th' other?

Mess. Capella. Sir, it seems you know no such then.

Lean. Who should this be? I never heard o' th' name.

Mess. Then 'tis a sure mistake.

Lean. What if you enquir'd
In the next street, sir? I saw gallants there
In the new houses that are built of late;
Ten to one, there you find her.

Mess. Nay, no matter,
I will return the mistake, and seek no further.

Lean. Use your own will and pleasure, sir,
you're welcome. [*Exit Messenger.*]
What shall I think of first! Come forth, Brancha,
Thou art betray'd, I fear me.

Enter BRANCHA.

Bran. Betray'd! how, sir?

Lean. The Duke knows thee.

Bran. Knows me! how know you that, sir?

Lean. Has got thy name.

Bran. (*Aside.*) Ay, and my good name too;
That's worse o' th' twain.

Lean. How comes this work about?

Bran. How should the Duke know me? can
you guess, mother?

Moth. Not I with all my wits; sure we kept
house close.

Lean. Kept close! not all the locks in Italy
Can keep you women so; you have been gadding,
And ventur'd out at twilight, to th' court green
yonder,

And met the gallant bowlers coming home;
Without your masks too, both of you, I'll be
hang'd else:

Thou hast been seen, Brancha, by some stranger;
Never excuse it.

Bran. I'll not seek the way, sir:

Do you think you've married me to mew me up
Not to be seen? what would you make of me?

Lean. A good wife, nothing else.

Bran. Why, so are some

That are seen ev'ry day, else the devil take 'em.

Lean. No more, then! I believe all virtuous in
thee,

Without an argument; 'twas but thy hard chance
To be seen somewhere, there lies all the mischief;
But I have devis'd a riddance.

Moth. Now I can tell you, son,

The time and place.

Lean. When, where?

Moth. What wits have I!

When you last took your leave, if you remember,
You left us both at window.

Lean. Right, I know that.

Moth. And not the third part of an hour after
The Duke past by, in a great solemnity,
To St. Mark's Temple, and to my apprehension
He look'd up twice to th' window.

Lean. Oh, there quicken'd
The mischief of this hour!

Bran. (*Aside.*) If you call't mischief,
It is a thing I fear I am conceiv'd with.

Lean. Look'd he up twice, and could you take
no warning?

Moth. Why once may do as much harm, son,
as a thousand :

Do not you know one spark has fir'd an house,
As well as a whole furnace?

Lean. My heart flames for't ;
Yet let's be wise, and keep all smother'd closely ;
I have bethought a means : Is the door fast ?

Moth. I lock'd it myself after him.

Lean. You know, mother,
At the end of the dark palour there's a place
So artificially contriv'd for a conveyance,
No search could ever find it ; when my father
Kept in for manslaughter, it was his sanctuary ;
There will I lock my life's best treasure up,
Brancha.

Bran. Would you keep me closer yet ?
Have you the conscience ? you're best e'en choak
me up, sir :

You make me fearful of your health and wits,
You cleave to such wild courses : what's the matter ?

Lean. Why, are you so insensible of your danger
To ask that now ? The Duke himself has sent for
you

To Lady Livia's, to a banquet, forsooth.

Bran. Now I beshrew you heartily, has he so !
And you the man would never yet vouchsafe
To tell me on't till now : you show your loyalty
And honesty at once ; and so farewell, sir.

Lean. Brancha, whether now ?

Bran. Why, to the Duke, sir :

You say he sent for me.

Lean. But thou dost not mean to go, I hope.

Bran. No ? I shall prove unmannerly,
Rude, and uncivil, mad, and imitate you.

Come, mother, come, follow his humour no longer,
We shall be all executed for treason shortly.

Moth. Not I, i'faith! I'll first obey the Duke,
And taste of a good banquet; I'm of thy mind.
I'll step but up and fetch two handkerchiefs
To pocket up some sweetmeats, and o'ertake thee.

[*Exit.*]

Bran. (*Aside.*) Why here's an old wench
would trot into a bawd now.
For some dry sucket, or a colt in March-pain*.

[*Exit.*]

Lean. Oh, thou the ripe time of man's misery,
wedlock,
When all his thoughts, like over-laden trees,
Crack with the fruits they bear, in cares, in jea-
lousies!

Oh! that's a fruit that ripens hastily,
After 'tis knit to marriage: it begins,
As soon as the sun shines upon the bride
A little to show colour. Blessed powers!
Whence comes this alteration? the distractions,
The fears and doubts it brings are numberless,
And yet the cause I know not. What a peace
Has he that never marries! if he knew
The benefit he enjoy'd, or had the fortune
To come and speak with me, he should know then
The infinite wealth he had, and discern rightly
The greatness of his treasure by my loss:
Nay, what a quietness has he 'bove mine,
That wears his youth out in a strumpet's arms,
And never spends more care upon a woman,

* A *sucket* was a sort of dried sweetmeat: for *marchpane*, see note, vol. ii. p. 245.

Than at the time of lust ; but walks away,
 And if he find her dead at his return,
 His pity is soon done, he breaks a sigh
 In many parts, and gives her but a piece on't!
 But all the fears, shames, jealousies, costs and
 troubles,
 And still renew'd cares of a marriage bed,
 Live in the issue, when the wife is dead.

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. A good perfection to your thoughts.

Lean. The news, sir?

Mess. Though you were pleas'd of late to pin
 an error on me,
 You must not shift another in your stead too :
 The Duke has sent me for you.

Lean. How ! for me, sir?

(*Aside.*) I see then 'tis my theft ; we're both be-
 tray'd.

Well, I'm not the first 'has stol'n away a maid,
 My countrymen have us'd it. I'll along with you,
 sir. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

LIVIA'S House. *A Banquet prepared. Enter*
 GUARDIANO and WARD.

Guard. Take you especial note of such a gen-
 tlewoman,
 She's here on purpose ; I have invited her,
 Her father, and her uncle to this banquet ;
 Mark her behaviour well, it does concern you ;
 And what her good parts are, as far as time

And place can modestly require a knowledge of,
Shall be laid open to your understanding.

You know I'm both your guardian and your uncle;
My care of you is double, ward and nephew,
And I'll express it here.

Ward. Faith, I should know her
Now by her mark among a thousand women:
A little pretty deft and tidy thing you say?

Guard. Right.

Ward. With a lusty sprouting sprig in her hair?

Guard. Thou goest the right way still; take
one mark more;

Thou shalt ne'er find her hand out of her uncle's,
Or else his out of hers, if she be near him;
The love of kind'red never yet stuck closer
Than their's to one another; he that weds her,
Marries her uncle's heart too. [Corns.

Ward. Say you so, sir?

Then I'll be ask'd i' th' church to both of them.

Guard. Fall back; here comes the Duke.

Ward. He brings a gentlewoman,
I should fall forward rather.

*Enter DUKE, leading in BRANCHA, and followed
by FABRITIO, HIPPOLITO, LIVIA, MOTHER,
ISABELLA, and Attendants.*

Duke. Come, Brancha,
Of purpose sent into the world to show
Perfection once in woman; I'll believe
Hence forward they have ev'ry one a soul too
'Gainst all the uncourteous opinions
That man's uncivil rudeness ever held of 'em.
Glory of Florence, 'light into mine arms!

Enter LEANTIO.

Bran. You comes a grudging man will chide
you, sir :

The storm is now in's heart, and would get nearer,
And fall here if it durst; it pours down yonder.

Duke. If that be he, the weather shall soon clear.
List, and I'll tell thee how. [*Whispers.*]

Lean. (*Aside.*) A kissing too!
I see 'tis plain lust now; adultery bolden'd;
What will it prove anon, when 'tis stuff'd full
Of wine and sweetmeats, being so impudent
fasting?

Duke. (*To Lean.*) We have heard of your good
parts, sir, which we honour
With our embrace and love. (*To Gentlem.*) Is not
the captainship
Of Rouan's citadel, since the late deceas'd,
Supplied by any yet?

Gentlem. By none, my lord.

Duke. (*To Lean.*) Take it, the place is yours
then, and as faithfulness
And desert grows, our favour shall grow with't.
Rise now the captain of our fort at Rouans.

Lean. The service of whole life give your grace
thanks.

Duke. Come sit, Brancha.

[*All sit down to the banquet.*]

Lean. (*Aside.*) This is some good yet,
And more than e'er I look'd for; a fine bit
To stay a cuckold's stomach: all preferment
That springs from sin and lust, it shoots up quickly,
As gardeners' crops do in the rotten'st grounds;

So is all means rais'd from base prostitution,
 E'en like a salad growing upon a dunghill.
 I'm like a thing that never was yet heard of,
 Half merry, and half mad ; much like a fellow
 That eats his meat with a good appetite,
 And wears a plague-sore that would fright a
 country ;

Or rather like the barren harden'd ass,
 That feeds on thistles till he bleeds again ;
 And such is the condition of my misery.

Liv. Is that your son, widow ?

Moth. Yes ; did your ladyship never know
 that till now ?

Liv. No, trust me did I,

(*Aside.*) Nor ever truly felt the power of love,
 And pity to a man, till now I know him.

I have enough to buy me my desires,
 And yet to spare ; that's one good comfort.

(*To Lean.*) Hark you,

Pray let me speak with you, sir, before you go.

Lean. With me, lady ? you shall, I am at your
 service.

What will she say now trow ? more goodness yet !

Ward. I see her now I'm sure ; the ape's so
 little,

I shall scarce feel her ; I have seen almost
 As tall as she sold in the fair for tenpence.

See how she simpers it, as if marmalade
 Would not melt in her mouth ; she might have
 the kindness, i'faith,

To send me a guilded bull from her own trencher ;
 A ram, a goat, or somewhat to be nibbling.

These women, when they come to sweet things
 once,

They forget all their friends, they grow so greedy;
Nay, oftentimes their husbands.

Duke. Here's a health now, gallants,
To the best beauty at this day in Florence.

Bran. Whoe'er she be, she shall not go un-
pledg'd, sir.

Duke. Nay, you're excus'd for this.

Bran. Who? I, my lord?

Duke. Yes, by the law of Bacchus; plead your
benefit,
You are not bound to pledge your own health,
lady.

Bran. That's a good way, my lord, to keep me
dry.

Duke. Nay, then I will not offend Venus so
much;

Let Bacchus seek his 'mends in another court;
Here's to thyself; Brancha.

Bran. Nothing comes
More welcome to that name than your grace.

Lean. (*Aside.*) So, so;
Here stands the poor thief now that stole the
treasure,

And he's not thought on. Ours is near kin now
To a twin misery born into the world:

First the hard conscienc'd worldling, he hoards
wealth up;

Then comes the next, and he feasts all upon't;
One's damn'd for getting, th' other for spending on't.

Oh! equal justice, thou hast met my sin
With a full weight; I'm rightly now oppress'd;
All her friends' heavy hearts lie in my breast.

Duke. Methinks there is no spirit amongst us
gallants,

But what divinely sparkles from the eyes
Of bright Brancha ; we sat all in darkness,
But for that splendor. Who was't told us lately
Of a match making right, a marriage tender ?

Guard. 'Twas I, my lord.

Duke. 'Twas you indeed. Where is she ?

Guard. This is the gentlewoman.

Fab. My lord, my daughter.

Duke. Why, here's some stirring yet.

Fab. She's a dear child to me.

Duke. That must needs be ; you say she is
your daughter.

Fab. Nay, my good lord, dear to my purse I
mean

Beside my person, I ne'er reckon'd that.
She has the full qualities of a gentlewoman ;
I have brought her up to music, dancing, what not,
That may commend her sex, and stir her husband.

Duke. And which is he now ?

Guard. This young heir, my lord.

Duke. What is he brought up to ?

Hip. (*Aside.*) To cat and trap.

Guard. My lord, he's a great ward, wealthy,
but simple ;

His parts consist in acres.

Duke. Oh, wise-acres.

Guard. You've spoke him in a word, sir.

Bran. 'Las, poor gentlewoman,
She's ill-bestead, unless she's dealt the wiselier,
And laid in more provision for her youth :
Fools will not keep in summer.

Lean. (*Aside.*) No, nor such wives
From whores in winter.

Duke. Yea, the voice too, sir !

Fab. Ay, and a sweet breast too*, my lord, I hope,

Or I have cast away my money wisely :

She took her pricksong earlier, my lord,

Than any of her kind'red ever did :

A rare child, though I say't; but I'd not have

The baggage hear so much, 'twould make her swell straight ;

And maids of all things must not be puff'd up.

Duke. Let's turn us to a better banquet, then ;

For music bids the soul of a man to a feast,

And that's indeed a noble entertainment,

Worthy Brancha's self; you shall perceive, beauty,

Our Florentine damsels are not brought up idly.

Bran. They are wiser of themselves it seems, my lord,

And can take gifts when goodness offers 'em.

[*Music.*

Lean. (*Aside.*) True, and damnation has taught you that wisdom ;

You can take gifts too. Oh, that music mocks me!

Liv. (*Aside.*) I am as dumb to any language now

But love's, as one that never learn'd to speak :

I am not yet so old, but he may think of me ;

My own fault, I have been idle a long time ;

But I'll begin the week, and paint to-morrow,

So follow my true labour day by day.

I never thriv'd so well as when I us'd it.

[*Isabella sings.*

* See note, vol. iv. p. 354. Stevens has very justly ridiculed its use as a cant term among musicians; but our poet had anticipated him in the observations made upon it by Brancha.

What harder chance can fall to woman,
 Who was born to cleave to some man,
 Than to bestow her time, youth beauty,
 Life's observance, honour, duty,
 On a thing for no use good,
 But to make physic work, or blood
 Force fresh in an old lady's cheek?
 She that would be
 Mother of fools, let her compound with me.

Ward. (Aside.) Here's a tune indeed; pish! I had rather hear one ballad sung i' th' nose now, of the lamentable drowning of fat sheep and oxen, than all these simpering tunes play'd upon cat's guts, and sung by little kitlings.

Fab. How like you her breast now, my lord?

Bran. (Aside.) Her breast*?

He talks as if his daughter had given suck
 Before she were married, as her betters have;
 The next he praises sure will be her nipples.

Duke. (Aside to Bran.) Methinks now such a
 voice to such a husband,
 Is like a jewel of unvalued worth,
 Hung at a fool's ear.

Fab. May it please your grace
 To give her leave to show another quality?

Duke. Marry, as many good ones as you will, sir.
 The more the better welcome.

Lean. (Aside.) But the less
 The better practis'd: that soul's black indeed
 That cannot commend virtue: but who keeps it?

* I think there is every reason to believe Brancha's speech and the Duke's spoken, as I have marked them, the one *aside*, and the other to Brancha; they were certainly not intended to be generally heard.

The extortioner will say to a sick beggar,
 Heaven comfort thee, though he give none himself:
 This good is common.

Fab. Will it please you now, sir,
 To entreat your Ward to take her by the hand,
 And lead her in a dance before the Duke?

Guard. That will I, sir; 'tis needful: hark
 you, nephew. [*Whispers to him.*]

Fab. Nay, you shall see, young heir, what
 you've for your money,
 Without fraud or imposture.

Ward. Dance with her?
 Not I, sweet guardianer; do not urge my heart to't,
 'Tis clean against my blood: dance with a stranger?
 Let who's will do't, I'll not begin first with her.

Hip. (*Aside.*) No, fear't not, fool, she's took
 a better order.

Guard. Why, who shall take her then?

Ward. Some other gentleman:
 Look, there's her uncle, a fine timber'd reveller;
 Perhaps he knows the manner of her dancing too,
 I'll have him do't before me; I have sworn guar-
 dianer,

Then may I learn the better.

Guard. Thou'lt be an ass still.

Ward. Ay, all that, uncle, shall not fool me out.
 Pish! I stick closer to myself than so.

Guard. I must entreat you, sir, to take your
 niece

And dance with her; my ward's a little wilful,
 He would have you show him the way.

Hip. Me, sir?
 He shall command it at all hours; pray tell
 him so,

Guard. I thank you for him, he has not wit himself, sir.

Hip. Come, my life's peace, (*Aside.*) I have a strange office on't here;

'Tis some man's luck to keep the joys he likes
Conceal'd for his own bosom; but my fortune
To set 'em out now for another's liking;
Like the mad misery of necessitous man,
That parts from his good horse with many praises,
And goes on foot himself; need must be obey'd
In ev'ry action, it mars man and maid. [*Music.*

[*Hippolito and Isabella dance, he bowing
and she courtseying to the Duke, and
afterwards to each other, both before and
after the dance.*

Duke. Signior Fabritio, you're a happy father;
Your cares and pains are fortunate you see;
Your cost bears noble fruits. Hippolito, thanks.

Fab. Here's some amends for all my charges yet.
She wins both prick and praise*, where'er she
comes.

Duke. How lik'st, Brancha?

Bran. All things well, my lord:
But this poor gentlewoman's fortune, that's the
worst.

Duke. There is no doubt, Brancha, she'll find
leisure
To make that good enough; he's rich and simple.

Bran. She has the better hope o' th' upper hand
indeed,
Which women strive for most.

Guard. Do't when I bid you, sir.

* The metaphor is taken from archery.

Ward. I'll venture but a hornpipe with her,
Guardianer,
Or some such married man's dance.

Guard. Well, venture something, sir.

Ward. I have rhyme for what I do.

Guard. But little reason, I think.

Ward. *Plain men dance the measures, the sin-
quápance, the gay :*

*Cuckolds dance the hornpipe ; and farmers dance
the hay :*

*Your soldiers dance the round, and maidens that
grow big :*

*Your drunkards, the canaries ; your whore and
bawd, the jig.*

Here's your eight kind of dancers, he that finds
the ninth let him pay the minstrels.

Duke. Oh, here he appears once in his own
person ;

I thought he would have married her by attorney,
And lain with her so too.

Bran. Nay, my kind lord,
There's very seldom any found so foolish
To give away his part there.

Lean. (*Aside.*) Bitter scoff!
Yet I must do't: with what a cruel pride
The glory of her sin strikes bye my afflictions!

[*Ward and Isabella dance, he ridiculously
imitates Hippolito.*

Duke. This thing will make shift, sirs, to make
a husband,
For ought I see in him: how think'st, Brancha?

Bran. 'Faith an ill-favour'd shift, my lord, me-
thinks ;

If he would take some voyage when he's married,

Dangerous, or long enough, and scarce be seen
Once in nine year together, a wife then
Might make indifferent shift to be content with
him.

Duke. A kiss; (*kisses her*), that wit deserves
to be made much on:

Come, our caroch.

Guard. Stands ready for your grace.

Duke. My thanks to all your loves. Come,
fair Brancha,

We have took special care of you, and provided
Your lodging near us now.

Bran. Your love is great, my lord.

Duke. Once more our thanks to all.

Omnes. All bless'd honours guard you.

[*Exeunt all but Leantio and Livia. Cor-
nets flourish.*]

Lean. (*Without noticing Liv.*) Hast thou left
me then, Brancha, utterly?

Oh, Brancha! now I miss thee; oh! return
And save the faith of woman: I ne'er felt
The loss of thee till now; 'tis an affliction
Of greater weight than youth was made to bear;
As if a punishment of after-life
Were fall'n upon man here; so new it is
To flesh and blood; so strange, so insupportable;
A torment e'en mistook, as if a body
Whose death were drowning, must needs there-
fore suffer it

In scalding oil.

Liv. Sweet sir!

Lean. (*Without noticing her.*) As long as mine
eye saw thee,
I half enjoy'd thee.

Liv. Sir!

Lean. (*Without noticing her.*) Canst thou forget
The dear pains my love took? how it has watch'd
Whole nights together, in all weathers for thee,
Yet stood in heart more merry than the tempest
That sung about mine ears, like dangerous flat-
terers

That can set all their mischief to sweet tunes;
And then receiv'd thee from thy father's window,
Into these arms at midnight; when we embrac'd
As if we had been statues only made for't,
To show art's life, so silent were our comforts,
And kiss'd as if our lips had grown together?

Liv. This makes me madder to enjoy him
now.

Lean. (*Without noticing her.*) Canst thou for-
get all this, and better joys
That we met after this, which then new kisses
Took pride to praise?

Liv. I shall grow madder yet:—Sir!

Lean. (*Without noticing her.*) This cannot be
but of some close bawd's working:—
Cry mercy, lady! What would you say to me?
My sorrow makes me so unmannerly,
So comfort bless me, I had quite forgot you.

Liv. Nothing, but e'en in pity to that passion
Would give your grief good counsel.

Lean. Marry, and welcome, lady,
It never could come better.

Liv. Then first, sir,
To make away all your good thoughts at once
of her,
Know, most assuredly, she is a strumpet.

Lean. Ha! *most assuredly?* Speak not a thing
So vile so certainly, leave it more doubtful.

Liv. Then I must leave all truth, and spare
my knowledge,
A sin which I too lately found and wept for.

Lean. Found you it?

Liv. Ay, with wet eyes.

Lean. Oh, perjurious friendship!

Liv. You miss'd your fortunes when you met
with her, sir.

Young gentlemen, that only love for beauty,
They love not wisely; such a marriage rather
Proves the destruction of affection;
It brings on want, and want's the key of whoredom.
I think you'd small means with her?

Lean. Oh, not any, lady.

Liv. Alas, poor gentleman! what mean'st thou,
sir,

Quite to undo thyself with thine own kind heart?
Thou art too good and pitiful to woman:
Marry, sir, thank thy stars for this bless'd fortune,
That rids the summer of thy youth so well
From many beggars, that had lain à sunning
In thy beams only else, till thou hadst wasted
The whole days of thy life in heat and labour.
What would you say now to a creature found
As pitiful to you, and as it were
E'en sent on purpose from the whole sex general,
To requite all that kindness you have shown to't?

Lean. What's that, madam?

Liv. Nay, a gentlewoman, and one able
To reward good things; ay, and bears a consci-
ence to't:

Couldst thou love such a one, that (blow all fortunes)

Would never see thee want?

Nay more, maintain thee to thine enemy's envy,
And shalt not spend a care for't, stir a thought,
Nor break a sleep? unless love's music waked thee,
No storm of fortune should: look upon me,
And know that woman.

Lean. Oh, my life's wealth, Brancha!

Liv. Still with her name? will nothing wear it out?

That deep sigh went but for a strumpet, sir.

Lean. It can go for no other that loves me.

Liv. (*Aside.*) He's vex'd in mind; I came too soon to him:

Where's my discretion now, my skill, my judgment?

I'm cunning in all arts but my own, love.

'Tis as unseasonable to tempt him now

So soon, as [for] a widow to be courted

Following her husband's corse; or to make bargain

By the grave side, and take a young man there:

Her strange departure stands like a hearse yet

Before his eyes; which time will take down
shortly. [*Exit.*

Lean. Is she my wife till death, yet no more mine?

That's a hard measure: then what's marriage good for?

Methinks by right I should not now be living,

And then 'twere all well. What a happiness

Had I been made of had I never seen her;

For nothing makes man's loss grievous to him,

But knowledge of the worth of what he loses ;
 For what he never had, he never misses :
 She's gone for ever, utterly ; there is
 As much redemption of a soul from hell,
 As a fair woman's body from his palace.
 Why should my love last longer than her truth ?
 What is there good in woman to be lov'd,
 When only that which makes her so has left her ?
 I cannot love her now, but I must like
 Her sin, and my own shame too, and be guilty
 Of law's breach with her, and mine own abusing ;
 All which were monstrous ! then my safest course
 For health of mind and body ; is to turn
 My heart, and hate her, most extremely hate her ;
 I have no other way : those virtuous powers
 Which were chaste witnesses of both our troths,
 Can witness she breaks first ! and I'm rewarded
 With captainship o' th' fort ; a place of credit
 I must confess, but poor ; my factorship
 Shall not exchange means with't ; he that died
 last in't,
 He was no drunkard, yet he died a beggar
 For all his thrift ; besides the place not fits me ;
 It suits my resolution, not my breeding.

Re-enter LIVIA.

Liv. (Aside.) I have try'd all ways I can, and
 have not power
 To keep from sight of him.—How are you now, sir ?

Lean. I feel a better ease, madam.

Liv. Thanks to blessedness !
 You will do well I warrant you ; fear it not, sir ;
 Join but your own good will to't ; he's not wise

That loves his pain or sickness, or grows fond
 Of a disease, whose property is to vex him,
 And spitefully drink his blood up. Out upon't, sir!
 Youth knows no greater loss. I pray let's walk, sir;
 You never saw the beauty of my house yet,
 Nor how abundantly fortune has bless'd me
 In world treasure: trust me I have enough, sir,
 To make my friend a rich man in my life,
 A great man at my death; yourself will say so.
 If you want any thing, and spare to speak,
 Troth, I'll condemn you for a wilful man, sir.

Lean. Why sure this can be but the flattery of
 some dream.

Liv. Now, by this kiss, my love, my soul and
 riches,

'Tis all true substance! [*Kisses him.*
 Come, you shall see my wealth; take what you
 list;

The gallanter you go, the more you please me:
 I will allow you too your page and footman,
 Your race-horses, or any various pleasure
 Exercis'd youth delights in; but to me
 Only, sir, wear your heart of constant stuff:
 Do but you love enough, I'll give enough.

Lean. Troth then, I'll love enough, and take
 enough.

Liv. Then we are both pleas'd enough.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter GUARDIANO *and* ISABELLA *at one Door,*
and the WARD *and* SORDIDO *at another.*

Guard. Now, nephew, here's the gentlewoman
 again.

Ward. Mass! here she's come again; mark her now, Sordido.

Guard. This is the maid my love and care has chose

Out for your wife, and so I tender her to you;
 Yourself has been eye-witness of some qualities
 That speak a courtly breeding, and are costly.
 I bring you both to talk together now;
 'Tis time you grew familiar in your tongues;
 To-morrow you join hands, and one ring ties you,
 And one bed holds you; if you like the choice,
 Her father and her friends are i' th' next room,
 And stay to see the contract ere they part;
 Therefore dispatch, good Ward, be sweet and
 short;

Like her, or like her not, there's but two ways;
 And one your body, th' other your purse pays.

Ward. I warrant you, guardianer, I'll not stand
 all day thruming,

But quickly shoot my bolt at your next coming.

Guard. Well said: good fortune to your bird-
 ing then.

Ward. I never miss'd mark yet.

Sord. Troth, I think, master, if the truth were
 known,

You never shot at any but the kitchen-wench,
 And that was a she woodcock, a mere innocent,
 That was oft lost and cry'd at eight-and-twenty.

Ward. No more of that meat, Sordido, here's
 eggs o' th' spit now.

We must turn gingerly; draw out the catalogue
 Of all the faults of women.

Sord. How, all the faults? have you so little
 reason to think so much paper will lie in my

breeches? Why ten carts will not carry it, if you set down but the bawds. All the faults? pray let's be content with a few of 'em; and if they were less, you would find 'em enough, I warrant you. Look you, sir.

Isab. (Aside.) But that I have th' advantage of the fool,

As much as a woman's heart can wish and joy at,
What an infernal torment 'twere to be
Thus bought and sold, and turn'd and pry'd into,
when, alas,

The worst bit is too good for him! the comfort is
'Has but a cater's place on't, and provides
All for another's table; yet how curious
The ass is; like some nice professor on't,
That buys up all the daintiest food i' th' markets,
And seldom licks his lips after a taste on't.

Sord. Now to her, now you've scan'd all her parts over.

Ward. But at [which] end shall I begin now, Sordido?

Sord. Oh, ever at a woman's lip, while you live, sir: do you ask that question?

Ward. Methinks, Sordido, she's but a crabbed face to begin with.

Sord. A crabbed face? that will save money.

Ward. How! save money, Sordido?

Sord. Ay, sir; for having a crabbed face of her own, she'll eat the less verjuice with her mutton; 'twill save verjuice at year's end, sir.

Ward. Nay, an your jests begin to be saucy once,

I'll make you eat your meat without mustard.

Sord. And that in some kind is a punishment.

Ward. Gentlewoman, they say 'tis your pleasure to be my wife, and you shall know shortly whether it be mine or no to be your husband; and thereupon thus I first enter upon you. (*Kisses her.*) Oh, most delicious scent! methinks it tasted as if a man had stept into a comfit-makers shop to let a cart go by, all the while I kiss'd her. It is reported, gentlewoman, you'll run mad for me if you have me not.

Isab. I should be in great danger of my wits, sir, For being so forward; (*aside*) should this ass kick backward now.

Ward. Alas, poor soul! and is that hair your own?

Isab. Mine own? yes sure, sir, I owe nothing for't.

Ward. 'Tis a good hearing, I shall have the less to pay when I have married you. (*To Sord.*) Look, do her eyes stand well.

Sord. They cannot stand better than in her head, I think: where would you have them? and for her nose, 'tis of a very good last.

Ward. I have known as good as that has not lasted a year though.

Sord. That's in the using of a thing; will not any strong bridge fall down in time, if we do nothing but beat at the bottom: a nose of buff would not last always, sir, especially if it came into th' camp once.

Ward. But, Sordido, how shall we do to make her laugh, that I may see what teeth she has; for I'll not bate her a tooth, nor take a black one into th' bargain.

Sord. Why, do but you fall in talk with her,

you cannot choose but one time or other, make her laugh, sir.

Ward. It shall go hard, but I will: (*To Isab.*) pray what qualities have you besides singing and dancing? can you play at shittlecock, forsooth?

Isab. Ay, and at stool-ball too, sir; I have great luck at it.

Ward. Why, can you catch a ball well?

Isab. I have catch'd two in my lap at one game.

Ward. What! have you, woman? I must have you learn

To play at trap too, then you're full and whole.

Isab. Any thing that you please to bring me up to,

I shall take pains to practise.

Ward. 'Twill not do, Sordido; we shall never get her mouth open wide enough.

Sord. No, sir? that's strange! then here's a trick for your learning.

[*Sordido gapes, Isabella gapes also, but covers her mouth with a handkerchief.*]

Look now! look now! quick, quick there!

Ward. Pox of that scurvy mannerly trick with handkerchief,

It hinder'd me a little, but I am satisfied.

When a fair woman gapes, and stops her mouth so,

It shows like a cloth stopple in a cream-pot:

I have fair hope of her teeth now, Sordido.

Sord. Why then 'you've all well, sir, for ought I see;

She's right and straight enough, now as she stands;

They'll commonly lie crooked, that's no matter;

wise gamesters

Never find fault with that, let 'em lie still so.

Ward. I'd fain mark how she goes, and then I have all: for of all creatures I cannot abide a splay-footed woman; she's an unlucky thing to meet in a morning; her heels keep together so, as if she were beginning an Irish dance still; and the wriggling of her bum playing the tune to't: but I have bethought a cleanly shift to find it; dab down as you see me, and peep of one side, when her back's toward you; I'll show you the way.

Sord. And you shall find me apt enough to peeping;
I have been of them has seen mad sights
Under your scaffolds.

Ward. Will it please you walk, forsooth,
A turn or two by yourself? you are so pleasing
to me,
I take delight to view you on both sides.

Isab. I shall be glad to fetch a walk to your
love, sir;
'Twill get affection a good stomach, sir,
(*Aside.*) Which I had need have to fall to such
coarse victuals.

[*She walks to the end of the stage, and they stoop down to look at her.*]

Ward. Now go thy ways for a clean treading
wench,
As ever man in modesty peep'd under.

Sord. I see the sweetest sight to please my
master.
Never went Frenchman righter upon ropes,
Than she on Florentine rushes.

Ward. 'Tis enough, forsooth.

Isab. And how do you like me now, sir?

Ward. Faith so well,
I never mean to part with thee, sweetheart,
Under some sixteen children, and all boys.

Isab. You'll be at simple pains, if you prove
kind,
And breed 'em all in your teeth*.

Ward. Nay, by my faith, what serves your
belly for? 'twould make my cheeks look like
blown bagpipes.

Enter GUARDIANO.

Guard. How now, ward and nephew,
Gentlewoman and niece ! Speak, is it so or not ?

Ward. 'Tis so ; we are both agreed, sir.

Guard. In to your kind'red then ;
There's friends, and wine, and music waits to
welcome you.

Ward. Then I'll be drunk for joy.

Sord. And I for company,
I cannot break my nose in a better action.

[*Exeunt.*

* In allusion to a superstitious idea, that an affectionate husband had the tooth-ache while his wife was breeding.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Scene—BRANCHA'S Lodgings at Court. Enter
BRANCHA, attended by two LADIES.

Bran. How go your watches, ladies? what's
o'clock now?

1 *Lady.* By mine full nine.

2 *Lady.* By mine a quarter past.

1 *Lady.* I set mine by St. Mark's.

2 *Lady.* St. Anthony's they say goes truer.

1 *Lady.* That's but your opinion, madam,
Because you love a gentleman o' th' name.

2 *Lady.* He's a true gentleman then.

1 *Lady.* So may he be
That comes to me to-night, for ought you know.

Bran. I'll end this strife straight: I set mine
by the sun;

I love to set by th' best, one shall not then
Be troubled to set often.

2 *Lady.* You do wisely in't.

Bran. If I should set my watch as some girls do
By ev'ry clock i' th' town, 'twould ne'er go true;
And too much turning of the dial's point,
Or tamp'ring with the spring, might in small time
Spoil the whole work too; here it wants of nine
now.

1 *Lady.* It does indeed, forsooth; mine's nearest
truth yet.

2 *Lady*. Yet I have found her
Lying with an advocate, which shew'd
Like two false clocks together in one parish.

Bran. So now I thank you, ladies ; I desire
Awhile to be alone.

1 *Lady*. And I am nobody,
Methinks, unless I have one or other with me.
(*Aside*.) Faith my desire and hers will ne'er be
sisters. [Exit Ladies.

Bran. How strangely woman's fortune comes
about !

This was the farthest way to come to me,
All would have judg'd, that knew me born in
Venice,

And there with many jealous eyes brought up,
That never thought they had me sure enough
But when they were upon me ; yet my hap's
To meet it here, so far off from my birth-place,
My friends, or kind'red : 'tis not good in sadness,
To keep a maid so strict in her young days ;
Restraint breeds wand'ring thoughts, as many
fasting days

A great desire to see flesh stirring again :
I'll ne'er use any girl of mine so strictly :
Howe'er they're kept, their fortunes find 'em out ;
I see't in me : if they be got in court,
I'll never forbid 'em the country ; nor the court,
Though they be born i' th' country ; they will
come to't,

And fetch their falls a thousand mile about,
Where one would little think on't.

Enter LEANTIO.

Lean. I long to see how my despiser looks,
Now she's come here to court: these are her
lodgings;

She's simply now advanc'd: I took her out
Of no such window, I remember first;

That was a great deal lower, and less carv'd.

Bran. How now! what silkworm's this? i' th'
name of pride!

What, is it he?

Lean. A bow i' th' ham * to your greatness;
You must have now three legs †, I take it, must
you not?

Bran. Then I must take another, I shall want
else

The service I should have; you have but two there.

Lean. You're richly plac'd.

Bran. Methinks you're wond'rous brave, sir.

Lean. A sumptuous lodging.

Bran. You've an excellent suit there.

Lean. A chair of velvet.

Bran. Is your cloak lin'd through, sir?

Lean. You're very stately here.

Bran. Faith, something proud, sir.

Lean. Stay, stay, let's see your cloth of silver
slippers.

* From this passage, as well as one in "Twelfth Night," where Malvolio imagines Sir Toby courtseying to him, it might be inferred that the custom of both sexes on these occasions were very similar. Mr. Reed, however, is of opinion that the word *court'sey* was employed to express acts of civility and respect by either men or women indiscriminately.

† "Three legs"—three bows. See note, vol. ii. p. 203.

Bran. Who's your shoemaker? he's made you
a neat boot.

Lean. Will you have a pair?
The Duke will lend you spurs.

Bran. Yes; when I ride.

Lean. 'Tis a brave life you lead.

Bran. I could ne'er see you
In such good clothes in my time.

Lean. In your time?

Bran. Sure I think, sir,
We both thrive best asunder.

Lean. You're a whore.

Bran. Fear nothing, sir.

Lean. An impudent, spiteful, strumpet.

Bran. Oh, sir, you give me thanks for your
captainship;

I thought you had forgot all your good manners.

Lean. And, to spite thee as much, look there;
there read, [Gives her a paper.

Vex, gnaw; thou shalt find there I am not love-
starv'd.

The world was never yet so cold, or pityless,
But there was ever still more charity found out,
Than at one proud fool's door; and 'twere hard,
i'faith,

If I could not pass that. Read to thy shame there;
A cheerful, and a beauteous, benefactor too,
As e'er erected the good works of love.

Bran. (*Aside.*) Lady Livia!

Is't possible? Her worship was my pandress;
She dote, and send, and give, and all to him!
Why, here's a bawd plagu'd home:—You're sim-
ply happy, sir,
Yet I'll not envy you.

Lean. No, court saint, not thou;
 You keep some friend of a new fashion;
 There's no harm in your devil, he's a suckling;
 But he will breed teeth shortly, will he not?

Bran. Take heed you play not then too long
 with him.

Lean. Yes, and the great one too: I shall find
 time

To play a hot religious bout with some of you,
 And perhaps drive you and your course of sins
 To their eternal kennels: I speak softly now,
 'Tis manners in a noble woman's lodgings,
 And I well know all my degrees of duty;
 But come I to your everlasting parting once,
 Thunder shall seem soft music to that tempest.

Bran. 'Twas said last week there would be
 change of weather,

When the moon hung so, and belike you heard it.

Lean. Why here's sin made, and ne'er a con-
 science put to't;

A monster with all forehead, and no eyes!

Why do I talk to thee of sense or virtue,

That art as dark as death? and as much madness

To set light before thee, as to lead blind folks

To see the monuments, which they may smell as
 soon

As they behold; marry, oftentimes their heads,

For want of light, may feel the hardness of 'em;

So shall thy blind pride my revenge and anger:

That canst not see it now; and it may fall

At such an hour, when thou least-seest of all:

So to an ignorance darker than thy womb,

I leave thy perjur'd soul: a plague will come!

[*Exit.*

Bran. Get you gone first, and then I fear no greater ;
 Nor thee will I fear long : I'll have this sauciness
 Soon banish'd from these lodgings, and the rooms
 Perfum'd well after the corrupt air it leaves :
 His breath has made me almost sick, in troth ;
 A poor base start-up ! Life ! because 'has got
 Fair clothes by foul means, comes to rail, and
 show 'em.

Enter the DUKE.

Duke. Who's that ?

Bran. Cry you mercy, sir !

Duke. Prithee who's that ?

Bran. The former thing, my lord, to whom
 you gave
 The captainship ; he eats his meat with grudging
 still.

Duke. Still !

Bran. He comes vaunting here of his new love,
 And the new clothes she gave him ; Lady Livia :
 Who but she now his mistress ?

Duke. Lady Livia ?
 Be sure of what you say.

Bran. He show'd me her name, sir,
 In perfum'd paper, her vows, her letter,
 With an intent to spite me ; so his heart said,
 And his threats made it good ; they were as
 spiteful
 As ever malice utter'd, and as dangerous,
 Should his hand follow the copy.

Duke. But that must not :
 Do not you vex your mind ; prithee to bed ; go,
 All shall be well and quiet.

Bran. I love peace, sir. [Exit.]

Duke. And so do all that love: take you no care for't,
It shall be still provided to your hand. Who's near us there?

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. My lord.

Duke. Seek out Hippolito,
Brother to Lady Livia, with all speed.

Mess. He was the last man I saw, my lord.

[Exit.]

Duke. Make haste.

He is a blood soon stir'd; and as he's quick
To apprehend a wrong, he's bold, and sudden
In bringing forth a ruin: I know likewise
The reputation of his sister's honour's,
As dear to him as life-blood to his heart;
Beside, I'll flatter him with a goodness to her,
Which I now thought on, but ne'er meant to
practice,
Because I know her base; and that wind drives him.
The ulcerous reputation feels the poise
Of lightest wrongs, as sores are vex'd with flies:
He comes:—Hippolito, welcome.

Enter HIPPOLITO.

Hip. My lov'd lord.

Duke. How does that lusty widow, thy kind
sister?

Is she not sped yet of a second husband?
A bed-fellow she has, I ask not that,
I know she's sped of him.

Hip. Of him, my lord ?

Duke. Yes, of a bed-fellow : is the news so strange to you ?

Hip. I hope 'tis so to all.

Duke. I wish it were, sir ;

But 'tis confess'd too fast, her ignorant pleasures
Only by lust instructed, have receiv'd

Into their services an impudent boaster ;
One that does raise his glory from her shame,

And tells the mid-day sun what's done in darkness ;
Yet (blinded with her appetite) wastes her wealth,

Buys her disgraces at a dearer rate,
Than bounteous housekeepers purchase their

honour.

Nothing sads me so much, as that in love
To thee, and to thy blood, I had pick'd out
A worthy match for her, the great Vincentio,
High in our favour, and in all mens' thoughts.

Hip. Oh, thou destruction of all happy fortunes,
Unsated blood ! Know you the name, my lord,
Of her abuser ?

Duke. One Leantio.

Hip. He's a factor.

Duke. He ne'er made so brave a voyage by
his own talk.

Hip. The poor old widow's son !

I humbly take my leave.

Duke. (*Aside.*) I see 'tis done.

Give her good counsel, make her see her error,
I know she'll hearken to you.

Hip. Yes, my lord,

I make no doubt, as I shall take the course,
Which she shall never know till it be acted ;

And when she wakes to honour, then she'll thank
me for't.

I'll imitate the pities of old surgeons
To this lost limb; who, ere they show their art,
Cast one asleep, then cut the diseas'd part:
So out of love to her I pity most,
She shall not feel him going till he's lost;
Then she'll commend the cure. [*Exit.*]

Duke. The great cure's past;
I count this done already; his wrath's sure,
And speaks an injury deep: farewell, Leantio,
This place will never hear thee murmur more,
Our noble brother welcome!

Enter LORD CARDINAL attended.

Card. Set those lights down:
Depart till you be called. [*Exit Attendants.*]

Duke. (*Aside.*) There's serious business
Fixed in his look; nay, it inclines a little
To the dark colour of a discontentment.
Brother, what is't commands your eye so power-
fully?

Speak, you seem lost.

Card. The thing I look on seems so;
To my eyes lost for ever.

Duke. You look on me.

Card. What a grief 'tis to a religious feeling,
To think a man should have a friend so goodly,
So wise, so noble, nay, a duke, a brother,
And all this certainly damn'd!

Duke. How!

Card. 'Tis no wonder,
If your great sin can do't: dare you look up
For thinking of a vengeance? dare you sleep

For fear of never waking, but to death?
 And dedicate unto a strumpet's love
 The strength of your affections, zeal and health?
 Here you stand now; can you assure your pleasures,

You shall once more enjoy her? but once more?
 Alas! you cannot: what a misery 'tis then
 To be more certain of eternal death,
 Than of a next embrace! nay, shall I show you
 How more unfortunate you stand in sin,
 Than the low private man*: all his offences,
 Like enclos'd grounds, keep but about himself,
 And seldom stretch beyond his own soul's bounds;
 And when a man grows miserable, 'tis some comfort

When he's no further charg'd, than with himself:
 'Tis a sweet ease to wretchedness: but, great man,
 Ev'ry sin thou commit'st shows like a flame
 Upon a mountain; 'tis seen far about;
 And with a big wind made of popular breath,
 The sparkles fly through cities: here one takes,
 Another catches there, and in short time
 Waste all to cinders: but remember still
 What burnt the vallies first, came from the hill;
 Ev'ry offence draws his particular pain,
 But 'tis example proves the great man's bane.
 The sins of mean men lie like scatter'd parcels
 Of an unperfect bill; but when such fall,
 Then comes example, and that sums up all:
 And this your reason grants; if men of good lives,
 Who by their virtuous actions stir up others
 To noble and religious imitation,

* The original reads, "love private man."

Receive the greater glory after death,
 (As sin must needs confess) what may they feel
 In height of torments, and in weight of veng'ance,
 (Not only they themselves, not doing well)
 But set* a light up to show men to hell?

Duke. If you have done, I have; no more,
 sweet brother.

Card. I know time spent in goodness, is too
 tedious:

This had not been a moment's space in lust now;
 How dare you venture on eternal pain,
 That cannot bear a minute's reprehension?
 Methinks you should endure to hear that talk'd of
 Which you so strive to suffer. Oh, my brother,
 What were you, if you were taken now!
 My heart weeps blood to think on't; 'tis a work
 Of infinite mercy, (you can never merit)
 That yet you are not death-struck; no, not yet:
 I dare not stay you long, for fear you should not
 Have time enough allow'd you to repent in.
 There's but this wall (*pointing to his body*) be-
 twixt you and destruction,
 When you're at strongest; and but poor thin clay.
 Think upon't, brother; can you come so near it,
 For a fair strumpet's love? and fall into
 A torment, that knows neither end nor bottom,
 For beauty, but the deepness of a skin,
 And that not of their own either? Is she a thing
 Whom sickness dare not visit, or age look on,
 Or death resist? does the worm shun her grave?
 If not (as your soul knows it) why should lust
 Bring man to lasting pain for rotten dust?

* The original reads, "*But sets a light up.*"

Duke. Brother of spotless honour, let me weep
 The first of my repentance in thy bosom,
 And show the bless'd fruits of a thankful spirit ;
 And if I e'er keep woman more, unlawfully,
 May I want penitence at my greatest need ;
 And wise men know there is no barren place.
 Threatens more famine, than a dearth in grace.

Card. Why here's a conversion, is at this time,
 brother,
 Sung for a hymn in heaven*, and at this instant
 The powers of darkness groan, makes all hell sorry.
 First, I praise heaven, then in my work I glory.
 Who's there attends without?

Enter SERVANTS.

Ser. My lord.

Card. Take up those lights : there was a thicker
 darkness,
 When they came first. The peace of a fair soul
 Keep with my noble brother. [*Exit Card. &c.*

Duke. Joys be with you, sir !
 She lies alone to-night for't, and must still,
 Though it be hard to conquer ; but I have vow'd
 Never to know her as a strumpet more,
 And I must save my oath : if fury fail not,
 Her husband dies to-night, or at the most,
 Lives not to see the morning spent to-morrow ;
 Then will I make her lawfully mine own,
 Without this sin and horror. Now I'm chidden,
 For what I shall enjoy then unforbidden ;

* It is needless to say that our poet here alludes to a passage in the 15th Chapter of St. Luke. The foregoing scene, however, does him the highest honour, and is worthy of the most serious consideration of every reader.

And I'll not freeze in stoves. 'Tis but a while :
 Live like a hopeful bridegroom, chaste from flesh,
 And pleasure then will seem new, fair, and fresh.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Enter HIPPOLITO.

Hip. The morning so far wasted, yet his base-
 ness

So impudent ! See if the very sun
 Do not blush at him !
 Dare he do thus much, and know me alive !
 Put case one must be vicious, as I know myself
 Monstrously guilty, there's a blind time made for't ;
 He might use only that, 'twere conscionable ;
 Art, silence, closeness, subtlety, and darkness,
 Are fit for such a business ; but there's no pity
 To be bestow'd on an apparent sinner,
 An impudent day-light lecher. The great zeal
 I bear to her advancement in this match
 With Lord Vincentio, as the Duke has wrought it,
 To the perpetual honour of our house,
 Puts fire into my blood, to purge the air
 Of this corruption, fear it spread too far,
 And poison the whole hopes of this fair fortune.
 I love her good so dearly, that no brother
 Shall venture farther for a sister's glory,
 Than I for her preferment.

Enter LEANTIO *and a* PAGE.

Lean. Once again
 I'll see that glist'ring whore, shines like a serpent
 Now the court sun's upon her, Page !

Page. Anon, sir!

Lean. I'll go in state too; see the coach be ready.

I'll hurry away presently.

Hip. Yes, you shall hurry,
And the devil after you: take that at setting forth.
[*Strikes him.*]

Now, an you'll draw, we are on equal terms, sir.
Thou took'st advantage of my name in honour,
Upon my sister; I ne'er saw the stroke
Come, till I found my reputation bleeding;
And therefore count it I no sin to valour
To serve thy lust so: now we are of even hand,
Take your best course against me. You must die.

Lean. How close sticks envy to man's happiness!

When I was poor, and little car'd for life,
I had no such means offer'd me to die,
No man's wrath minded me. Slave, I turn this
to thee, [*Draws.*]
To call thee to account, for a wound lately
Of a base stamp upon me.

Hip. 'Twas most fit
For a base mettle. Come and fetch one now
More noble then; for I will use thee fairer
Than thou hast done thy soul, or our honour;
[*They fight.*]

And there I think 'tis for thee.

Within. Help! help! Oh, part 'em!

Lean. (*Falls.*) False wife! I feel now thou'st
pray'd heartily for me:
Rise, strumpet, by my fall; thy lust may reign now;
My heart-string, and the marriage knot that ty'd
thee,
Break both together. [*Dies.*]

Hip. There I heard the sound on't;
And never lik'd string better.

Enter GUARDIANO, LIVIA, ISABELLA, WARD,
and SORDIDO.

Liv. 'Tis my brother!
Are you hurt, sir?

Hip. Not any thing.

Liv. Blessed fortune!
Shift for thyself: what is he thou hast kill'd?

Hip. Our honour's enemy.

Guard. Know you this man, lady?

Liv. Leantio? My love's joy? (*To Hip.*)
Wounds stick upon thee

As deadly as thy sins! art thou not hurt,
(The devil take that fortune), and he dead?

Drop plagues into thy bowels without voice,
Secret, and fearful! Run for officers;

Let him be apprehended with all speed,
For fear he 'scape away; lay hands on him.

We cannot be too sure, 'tis wilful murder:
(*They seize Hip.*) You do heaven's veng'ance,

and the law just service.

You know him not as I do; he's a villain,
As monstrous as a prodigy, and as dreadful.

Hip. Will you but entertain a noble patience,
Till you but hear the reason, worthy sister?

Liv. The reason! that's a jest hell falls a laugh-
ing at:

Is there a reason found for the destruction
Of our more lawful loves; and was there none
To kill the black lust 'twixt thy niece and thee,
That has kept close so long?

Guard. How's that, good madam?

Liv. Too true, sir; there she stands, let her deny't:

The deed cries shortly in the midwife's arms,
Unless the parent's sins strike it still-born:
And if you be not deaf, and ignorant,
You'll hear strange notes ere long. Look on me, wench!

'Twas I betray'd thy honour subtilely to him
Under a false tale; it lights upon me now;
His arm has paid me home upon thy breast,
My sweet belov'd Leantio!

Guard. Was my judgment
And care in choice so dev'lishly abus'd,
So beyond shamefully—all the world will grin at me!

Ward. Oh, Sordido, Sordido, I'm damn'd, I'm damn'd!

Sord. Damn'd! why, sir?

Ward. One of the wicked; dost not see't? a cuckold, a plain reprobate cuckold.

Sord. Nay, an you be damn'd for that, be of good cheer, sir;
You've gallant company of all professions; I'll have a wife
Next Sunday too, because I'll along with you myself.

Ward. That will be some comfort yet.

Liv. You, sir, that bear your load of injuries,
As I of sorrows, lend me your griev'd strength
To this sad burthen; (*pointing to the body of Leantio.*) who in life wore actions,
Flames were not nimbler. We will talk of things
May have the luck to break our hearts together

Guard. I'll list to nothing but revenge and anger,
Whose counsels I will follow.

[*Exeunt Livia and Guardiano with the
body of Leantio.*]

Sord. A wife, quoth'a!

Here's a sweet plum-tree of your gardener's graf-
fing!

Ward. Nay, there's a worse name belongs to
this fruit yet, an you could hit on't; a more
open one: for he that marries a whore, looks
like a fellow bound all his lifetime to a medler-
tree, and that's good stuff; 'tis no sooner ripe,
but it looks rotten; and so do some queans at
nineteen. A pox on't! I thought there was some
knavery a-broach, for something stir'd in her
belly the first night I lay with her.

Sord. What, what, sir!

Ward. This is she brought up so courtly, can
sing, and dance, and tumble too methinks; I'll
never marry wife again that has so many qua-
lities.

Sord. Indeed they are seldom good, master;
for likely when they are taught so many, they
will have one trick more of their own finding
out. Well, give me a wench but with one good
quality, to lie with none but her husband, and
that's bringin'g up enough for any woman breath-
ing.

Ward. This was the fault when she was ten-
der'd to me; you never look'd to this.

Sord. Alas! how would you have me see
through a great farthingale, sir? I cannot peep
through a mill-stone, or in the going to see what's
done i' th' bottom.

Ward. Her father prais'd her breast ; she'd
 the voice, forsooth !
 I marvel'd she sung so small indeed, being no
 maid ;
 Now I perceive there's a young chorister in her
 belly :

This breeds a singing in my head, I'm sure.

Sord. 'Tis but the tune of your wife's sinqua-
 pace danc'd in a featherbed : faith, go lie down,
 master ; but take heed your horns do not make
 holes in the pillowbers. (*Aside.*) I would not
 batter brows with him for a hogshead of angels :
 he would prick my skull as full of holes as a
 scrivener's sand-box. [*Exeunt Ward and Sord.*

Isab. (*Aside.*) Was ever maid so cruelly be-
 guil'd

To the confusion of life, soul, and honour,
 All of one woman's murd'ring ! I'd fain bring
 Her name no nearer to my blood than woman,
 And 'tis too much of that. Oh, shame and horror !
 In that small distance from yon man to me,
 Lies sin enough to make a whole world perish.
 (*To Hip.*) 'Tis time we parted, sir, and left the
 sight

Of one another ; nothing can be worse
 To hurt repentance ; for our very eyes
 Are far more poisonous to religion,
 Than basilisks to them : if any goodness
 Rest in you, hope of comforts, fear of judgments !
 My request is, I ne'er may see you more ;
 And so I turn me from you everlastingly,
 So is my hope to miss you : but for her,
 That durst so dally with a sin so dangerous,
 And lay a snare so spitefully for my youth,

If the least means but favour my revenge,
That I may practise the like cruel cunning
Upon her life, as she has on mine honour,
I'll act it without pity.

Hip. Here's a care
Of reputation, and a sister's fortune
Sweetly rewarded by her: would a silence,
As great as that which keeps among the graves,
Had everlastingly chain'd up her tongue;
My love to her has made mine miserable.

Enter GUARDIANO and LIVIA.

Guard. (Aside to Liv.) If you can but dissem-
ble your heart's griefs now;
Be but a woman so far.

Liv. (Aside to Guard.) Peace! I'll strive, sir.

Guard. (Aside to Liv.) As I can wear my
injuries in a smile.

Here's an occasion offer'd, that gives anger
Both liberty and safety to perform
Things worth the fire it holds, without the fear
Of danger, or of law; for mischiefs acted
Under the privilege of a marriage triumph
At the Duke's hasty nuptials, will be thought
Things merely accidental, all by chance,
Not got of their own natures.

Liv. (Aside to Guard.) I conceive you, sir,
Even to a longing for performance on't;
And here behold some fruits—(*Kneels to Hip.*

and Isab.) Forgive me both,
What I am now, return'd to sense and judgment:
'Tis not the same rage and distraction
Presented lately to you; that rude form

Is gone for ever; I am now myself,
That speaks all peace, and friendship; and these
tears

Are the true springs of hearty penitent sorrow
For those foul wrongs, which my forgetful fury
Slander'd your virtues with: this gentleman
Is well resolv'd now.

Guard. I was never otherwise;
I knew; alas! 'twas but your anger spake it,
And I ne'er thought on't more.

Hip. Pray rise, good sister.

Isab. (*Aside.*) Here's e'en as sweet amends
made for a wrong now,
As one that gives a wound, and pays the surgeon;
All the smart's nothing, the great loss of blood,
Or time of hind'rance: well, I had a mother,
I can dissemble too.—What wrongs have slip'd
Through anger's ignorance, aunt, my heart for-
gives.

Guard. Why that's tuneful now!

Hip. And what I did, sister,
Was all for honour's cause, which time to come
Will approve to you.

Liv. Being awak'd to goodness,
I understand so much, sir, and praise now
The fortune of your arm, and of your safety;
For by his death you've rid me of a sin
As costly as e'er woman doted on;
'T has pleas'd the Duke so well too, that (be-
hold, sir)
'Has sent you here your pardon, which I kiss'd
With most affectionate comfort; when 'twas
brought,

Then was my fit just pass'd; it came so well, methought,
To glad my heart.

Hip. I see his grace thinks on me.

Liv. There's no talk now but of the preparation
For the great marriage.

Hip. Does he marry her, then?

Liv. With all speed, suddenly, as fast as cost
Can be laid on with many thousand hands.
This gentleman and I had once a purpose
To have honoured the first marriage of the Duke
With an invention of his own; 'twas ready
The pains well past, most of the charge bestow'd
on't;

Then came the death of your good mother, niece,
And turn'd the glory of it all to black:
'Tis a device would fit these time so well too;
Art's treasury not better; if you'll join
It shall be done; the cost shall all be mine.

Hip. You've my voice first, 'twill well approve
my thankfulness
For the Duke's love and favour.

Liv. What say you, niece?

Isab. I am content to make one.

Guard. The plot's full then;
Your pages, madam, will make shift for cupids.

Liv. That will they, sir.

Guard. You'll play your old part still.

Liv. What is't? Good troth, I have e'en forgot it.

Guard. Why, Juno Pronuba, the marriage goddess.

Liv. 'Tis right indeed.

Guard. And you shall play the nymph,
That offers sacrifice to appease her wrath.

Isab. Sacrifice, good sir?

Liv. Must I be appeas'd then?

Guard. That's as you list yourself, as you see
cause.

Liv. Methinks 'twould show the more state in
her deity,
To be incens'd.

Isab. 'Twould! but my sacrifice
Shall take a course to appease you, (*aside*) or I'll
fail in't,
And teach a sinful bawd to play a goddess.

[*Exit.*

Guard. For our parts, we'll not be ambitious, sir:
Please you walk in, and see the project drawn,
Then take your choice.

Hip. I weigh not, so I have one.

[*Exeunt Guard. and Hip.*

Liv. How much ado have I to restrain fury
From breaking into curses! Oh, how painful 'tis
To keep great sorrow smother'd! sure, I think,
'Tis harder to dissemble grief than love.
Leantio, here the weight of thy loss lies,
Which nothing but destruction can suffice.

[*Exit.*

Hautboys. *The DUKE and BRANCHA enter in
great State, very richly attired, attended by Lords,
Cardinals, Ladies, and others: as they are pass-
ing solemnly over the Stage, the LORD CARDI-
NAL enters in a rage, and interrupts the Cere-
mony.*

Card. Cease, cease! Religious honours done
to sin,
Disparage virtue's reverence, and will pull

Heaven's thunder upon Florence : holy ceremonies
Were made for sacred uses, not for sinful.

Are these the fruits of your repentance, brother ?

Better it had been you had never sorrow'd,

Than to abuse the benefit, and return

To worse than where sin left you.

Vow'd you then never to keep strumpet more,

And are you now so swift in your desires,

To knit your honour and your life fast to her ?

Is not sin sure enough to wretched man,

But he must bind himself in chains to't ? Worse !

Must marriage, that immaculate robe of honour,

That renders virtue glorious, fair, and fruitful

To her great master, be now made the garment

Of leprosy and foulness ? Is this penitence

To sanctify hot lust ? What is it otherwise

Than worship done to devils ? Is this the best

Amends that sin can make after her riots ?

As if a drunkard, to appease heaven's wrath,

Should offer up his surfeit for a sacrifice :

If that be comely, then lust's offerings are

On wedlock's sacred altar.

Duke. Here you're bitter

Without cause, brother : what I vow'd I keep,

As safe as you your conscience : and this needs not ;

I taste more wrath in't than I do religion,

And envy more than goodness : the path now

I tread is honest, leads to lawful love,

Which virtue in her strictness would not check.

I vow'd no more to keep a sensual woman ;

'Tis done, I mean to make a lawful wife of her.

Card. He that taught you that craft,

Call him not master long, he will undo you :

Grow not too cupping for your soul, good brother :

Is it enough to use adulterous thefts,
 And then take sanctuary in marriage?
 I grant, so long as an offender keeps
 Close in a privileged temple, his life's safe;
 But if he ever venture to come out,
 And so be taken, then he surely dies for't:
 So now you're safe; but when you leave this body,
 Man's only privileg'd temple upon earth,
 In which the guilty soul takes sanctuary,
 Then you'll perceive what wrongs chaste vows
 endure,
 When lust usurps the bed that should be pure.

Bran. Sir, I have read you over all this while
 In silence, and I find great knowledge in you,
 And severe learning; yet 'mongst all your virtues
 I see not charity written; which some call
 The first-born of religion, and I wonder
 I cannot see't in yours: believe it, sir,
 There is no virtue can be sooner miss'd,
 Or later welcom'd; it begins the rest,
 And sets 'em all in order*; Heaven and angels
 Take great delight in a converted sinner.
 Why should you then, a servant and professor,
 Differ so much from them? If ev'ry woman,
 That commits evil, should be therefore kept
 Back in desires of goodness, how should virtue
 Be known and honour'd? From a man that's blind,
 To take a burning taper, 'tis no wrong,
 He never misses it: but to take light
 From one that sees, that's injury and spite.

* Brancha here evidently alludes to the 13th chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians:—

“ Mark you this, Bassanio;

The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.”

Pray whether is religion better serv'd,
 When lives that are licentious are made honest,
 Than when they still run through a sinful blood?
 'Tis nothing virtue's temples to deface;
 But build the ruins, there's a work of grace.

Duke. I kiss thee for that spirit; thou hast
 prais'd thy wit

A modest way. On, on there! [*Hautboys.*

Card. Lust is bold,
 And will have veng'ance speak, ere 't. be con-
 troul'd. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter GUARDIANO *and* WARD.

Guard. Speak, hast thou any sense of thy abuse?
Dost thou know what wrong's done thee?

Ward. I were an ass else.
I cannot wash my face, but I am feeling on't.

Guard. Here take this caltrop, then convey it
secretly

Into the place I show'd you: look you, sir,
This is the trap-door to't.

Ward. I know't of old, uncle, since the last
triumph; here rose up a devil with one eye, I
remember, with a company of fireworks at's tail.

Guard. Prithee leave squibbing now. Mark
me, and fail not; but when thou hear'st me give
a stamp, down with't; the villain's caught then.

Ward. If I miss you, hang me: I love to catch
a villain, and your stamp shall go current I war-
rant you. But how shall I rise up and let him
down too all at one hole? that will be a horrible
puzzle. You know I have a part in't, I play
Slander.

Guard. True, but never make you ready for't.

Ward. No? my clothes are bought and all,
and a foul fiend's head with a long contumelious
tongue i' th' chaps on't, a very fit shape for Slan-
der i' th' out-parishes.

Guard. It shall not come so far: thou under-
stand'st it not.

Ward. Oh, oh!

Guard. He shall lie deep enough ere that time,
And stick first upon those.

Ward. Now I conceive you, guardiner.

Guard. Away, list to the privy stamp, that's
all thy part.

Ward. Stamp my horns in a mortar if I miss
you, and give the powder in white wine to sick
cuckolds, a very present remedy for the head-
ache. [Exit.

Guard. If this should any way miscarry now
(As if the fool be nimble enough, 'tis certain),
The pages that present the swift-wing'd Cupids,
Are taught to hit him with their shafts of love,
Fitting his part, which I have cunningly poison'd:
He cannot 'scape my fury; and those ill
Will be laid all on fortune, not our wills;
That's all the sport on't! for who will imagine,
That at the celebration of this night
Any mischance that hap's, can flow from spite?
[Exit.

SCENE II.

Flourish. Enter above, DUKE, BRANCHA, LORD
CARDINAL, FABRITIO, and other Cardinals,
Lords and Ladies in State.

Duke. Now, our fair dutchess, your delight
shall witness
How you're belov'd and honour'd; all the glories
Bestow'd upon the gladness of this night,
Are done for your bright sake.

Bran. I am the more

In debt, my lord, to loves and courtesies,
That offer up themselves so bounteously
To do me honour'd grace, without my merit.

Duke. A goodness set in greatness! how it
sparkles

Afar off like pure diamonds set in gold.

How perfect my desires were, might I witness
But a fair noble peace, 'twixt your two spirits!
The reconcilment would be more sweet to me,
Than longer life to him that fears to die.

(*To the Card.*) Good sir.

Card. I profess peace, and am content.

Duke. I'll see the seal upon't, and then 'tis
firm.

Card. You shall have all you wish.

Duke. I have all indeed now.

Bran. (*Aside.*) But I have made surer work;
this shall not blind me:

He that begins so early to reprove,
Quickly rid him, or look for little love.
Beware a brother's envy; he's next heir too.
Cardinal, you die this night; the plot's laid surely:
In time of sports death may steal in securely;
Then 'tis least thought on:

For he that's most religious, holy friend,
Does not at all hours think upon his end;
He has his times of frailty, and his thoughts,
Their transportations too, through flesh and blood,
For all his zeal, his learning, and his light,
As well as we, poor soul, that sin by night.

Duke. What's this, Fabritio?

[*Looking at a paper.*

Fab. Marry, my lord, the model
Of what's presented.

Duke. Oh, we thank their loves :

Sweet dutchess, take your seat; list to the argument.

[*Reads.*

There is a nymph that haunts the woods and springs,

In love with two at once, and they with her;

Equal it runs; but to decide these things,

The cause to mighty Juno they refer,

She being the marriage-goddess: the two lovers

They offer sighs; the nymph a sacrifice;

All to please Juno, who by signs discovers

How the event shall be, so that strife dies:

Then springs a second; for the man refus'd

Grows discontent, and out of love abus'd,

He raises Slander up, like a black fiend,

To disgrace th' other, which pays him i' th' end.

Bran. In troth, my lord, a pretty pleasing argument,

And fits th' occasion well; Envy and Slander
Are things soon rais'd against two faithful lovers;
But comfort is, they're not long unrewarded.

[*Music.*

Duke. This music shows they're upon entrance now.

Bran. (*Aside.*) Then enter all my wishes.

Enter HYMEN in a yellow Robe, GANYMED in a blue Robe powdered with Stars, and HEBE in a white Robe with golden Stars, with covered Cups in their Hands: they dance a short Dance, then bowing to the DUKE and the rest of the Company, HYMEN speaks, addressing himself to BRANCHA.

Hym. To thee, fair bride, Hymen offers up
Of nuptial joys this the celestial cup :

Taste it, and thou shalt ever find
Love in thy bed, peace in thy mind.

Bran. We'll taste you sure, 'twere pity to disgrace

So pretty a beginning.

Duke. 'Twas spoke nobly.

Gan. Two cups of nectar have we begg'd from
Jove;

Hebe, give that to innocence, I this to love.

Take heed of stumbling more, look to your way,
Remember still the Via Lactea.

Hebe. Well, Ganymed, you have more faults,
though not so known;

I spill'd one cup, but you have filch'd many a one.

Hym. No more; forbear for Hymen's sake;
In love we met, and so let's part. [*Exeunt.*

Duke. But soft! here's no such persons in the
argument

As these three, Hymen, Hebe, Ganymed.

The actors that this model here discovers
Are only four—Juno, a nymph, two lovers.

Bran. This is some anti-mask belike, my lord,
To entertain time: now my peace is perfect,
Let sports come on apace; now is their time, my
lord. [*Music.*

Hark you! you hear from 'em.

Duke. The nymphs indeed!

Enter two dressed like Nymphs, bearing two Tapers lighted; then ISABELLA, dressed with Flowers and Garlands, bearing a Censor with Fire in it; they set the Censor and Tapers on Juno's Altar with much Reverence; this Ditty being sung in Parts.

[*Io*], Juno, nuptial goddess,
 Thou that rul'st o'er coupled bodies,
 Ty'st man to woman, ne'er to forsake her,
 Thou only powerful marriage-maker,
 Pity this amaz'd affection;
 I love both, and both love me;
 Nor know I where to give rejection,
 My heart likes so equally,
 Till thou set'st right my peace of life,
 And with thy power conclude this strife.

Isab. Now, with my thanks, depart you to the
 springs;

I to these wells of love: thou sacred goddess,
 And queen of nuptials, daughter to great Saturn,
 Sister and wife to Jove, imperial Juno,
 Pity this passionate conflict in my breast,
 This tedious war, 'twixt two affections;
 Crown me with victory, and my heart's at peace.

*Enter HIPPOLITO and GUARDIANO, dressed like
 Shepherds.*

Hip. Make me that happy man, thou mighty
 goddess.

Guard. But I live most in hope, if truest love
 Merit the greatest comfort.

Isab. I love both
 With such an even and fair affection,

I know not which to speak for, which to wish for,
Till thou, great arbitress, 'twixt lovers' hearts,
By thy auspicious grace, design the man :
Which pity I implore.

Both. We all implore it.

Isab. And after sighs, contritions truest odours,
[*Livia descends attired like Juno.*

I offer to thy powerful deity
This precious incense ; (*scatters incense on the
fire*), may it ascend peacefully :
(*Aside.*) And if it keep true touch, my good
aunt Juno,

'Twill try your immortality ere 't be long :
I fear you'll never get so nigh heaven again,
When you're once down.

Liv. Though you and your affections
Seem all as dark to our illustrious brightness
As night's inheritance, hell, we pity you,
And your requests are granted : you ask signs ;
They shall be given you ; we'll be gracious to
you.

He, of those twain, which we determine for you,
Love's arrows shall wound twice, the later wound
Betokens love in age ; for so are all
Whose love continues firmly all their lifetime,
Twice wounded at their marriage ; else affection
Dies when youth ends. (*This savour overcomes
me!*)

Now for a sign of wealth and golden days,
Bright-ey'd prosperity, which all couples love,
Ay, and makes love take that*. Our brother Jove
Never denies us of his burning treasure,
T' express bounty. [*Isabella sinks down.*

* I confess I have no very clear understanding of this passage.

Duke. She falls down upon't :
What's the conceit of that ?

Fab. As overjoy'd belike.
Too much prosperity overjoys us all,
And she has her lapful it seems, my lord.

Duke. This swerves a little from the argument
though :
Look you, my lords.

Guard. (*Aside.*) All's fast : now comes my part
to toll* him hither ;
Then, with a stamp given, he's dispatch'd as cunningly. [*Guard. falls through a trap-door.*]

Hip. Stark dead : Oh treachery ! cruelly made
away ! how's that ?

Fab. Look, there's one of the lovers dropp'd
away too.

Duke. Why, sure this plot's drawn false ; here's
no such thing.

Liv. Oh, I am sick to the death ! let me down
quickly ;
This fume is deadly : oh, 't has poison'd me !
My subtlety is sped, her art has quitted me ;
My own ambition pulls me down to ruin.

[*Falls down and dies.*]

Hip. Nay, then I kiss thy cold lips, and applaud
This thy revenge in death.

[*Kisses the body of Isabella.*]

Fab. Look, Juno's down too :
[*Cupids shoot at Hip.*]

What makes she there ? her pride should keep
aloft.

* To entice, or allure him : the word frequently occurs in
Beaumont and Fletcher.

She was wont to scorn the earth in other shows:
Methinks her peacock's feathers are much pull'd.

Hip. Oh! death runs through my blood, in a
wild flame too.

Plague of those Cupids! some lay hold on 'em;
Let 'em not 'scape, they have spoil'd me; the
shaft's deadly.

Duke. I have lost myself in this quite.

Hip. My great lords, we are all confounded.

Duke. How?

Hip. Dead; and I worse.

Fab. Dead! my girl dead? I hope
My sister Juno has not serv'd me so.

Hip. Lust and forgetfulness has been amongst us,
And we are brought to nothing: some bless'd
charity

Lend me the speeding pity of his sword
To quench this fire in blood. Leantio's death
Has brought all this upon us: now I taste it,
And made us lay plots to confound each other:
The event so proves it; and man's understanding
Is riper at his fall, than all his lifetime.
She in a madness for her lover's death,
Reveal'd a fearful lust in our near bloods,
For which I am punish'd dreadfully and unlook'd
for;

Prov'd her own ruin too; veng'ance met vengeance,
Like a set match; as if the plagues of sin
Had been agreed to meet her altogether.

But how her fawning partner fell I reach not,
Unless caught by some spring of his own setting:
(For, on my pain, he never dream'd of dying;)
The plot was all his own, and he had cunning
Enough to save himself; but 'tis the property

Of guilty deeds to draw your wise men downward,
Therefore the wonder ceases.—Oh, this torment!

Duke. Our guard below there!

Enter a LORD with a Guard.

Lord. My lord.

Hip. Run and meet death then,
And cut off time and pain. [*Falls on his sword.*]

Lord. Behold, my lord, he's run his breast upon
a weapon's point.

Duke. Upon the first night of our nuptial honours,
Destruction play her triumph, and great mischiefs
Mask in expected pleasures: 'tis prodigious!
They're things most fearfully ominous: I like 'em
not.

Remove these ruin'd bodies from our eyes.

Bran. (Aside.) Not yet no change? when falls
he to the earth?

Lord. Please but your excellence to peruse
that paper,
Which is a brief confession from the heart
Of him that fell first, ere his soul departed;
And there the darkness of these deeds speaks
plainly:

'Tis the full scope, the manner, and intent.
His ward, that ignorantly let him down,
Fear put to present flight at the voice of him:

Bran. (Aside.) Nor yet?

Duke. Read, read! for I am lost in sight and
strength. [*Falls.*]

Card. My noble brother!

Bran. Oh, the curse of wretchedness!
My deadly hand is fall'n upon my lord:

Destruction take me to thee! give me way;
The pains and plagues of a lost soul upon him,
That hinders me a moment!

Duke. My heart swells bigger yet: help! here
break't ope!

My breast flies open next. [*Dies.*

Bran. Oh! with the poison,
That was prepar'd for thee; thee, Cardinal;
'Twas meant for thee.

Card. Poor prince!

Bran. Accursed error!
Give me thy last breath, thou infected bosom,
And wrap two spirits in one poison'd vapour.
Thus, thus, reward thy murderer, and turn death
Into a parting kiss: my soul stands ready at my
lips,

E'en vex'd to stay one minute after thee.

[*Kisses the dead body of the Duke.*

Card. The greatest sorrow and astonishment
That ever struck the general peace of Florence,
Dwells in this hour.

Bran. So my desires are satisfied,
I feel death's power within me.
Thou hast prevail'd in something (cursed poison!)
Though thy chief force was spent in my lord's
bosom:

But my deformity in spirit's more foul;
A blemish'd face best fits a leprous soul.
What make I here? these are all strangers to me,
Not known but by their malice; now thou'rt gone;
Nor do I seek their pities. [*Stabs herself**.

* I have added this stage direction, without which I cannot otherwise understand the following speech of the Lord Cardinal's.

Card. Oh, restrain
Her ignorant, wilful hand!

Bran. Now do; 'tis done.

Leantio, now I feel the breach of marriage
At my heart-breaking. Oh, the deadly snares
That women set for women, without pity
Either to soul or honour! Learn by me
To know your foes: in this belief I die;
Like our own sex, we have no enemy: no enemy.

Lord. See, my lord,
What shift she's made to be her own destruction.

Bran. Pride, greatness, honours, beauty, youth,
ambition,
You must all down together, there's no help for't:
Yet this my gladness is, that I remove,
Tasting the same death in a cup of love. [*Dies.*

Card. Sin, what thou art, these ruins show too
piteously.

Two kings on one throne cannot sit together,
But one must needs down, for his title's wrong;
So where lust reigns, that prince cannot reign
long*.

[*Exeunt.*

* It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that the incidents in this last act are by far too crowded, or that the means by which they are produced are not sufficiently explained. The editor has tried to supply this deficiency (in part) by additional marginal directions, the propriety of which he readily submits to the judgment of those acquainted with the original.